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PORT ROYAL

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE

HISTORY OF RELIGION AND LITERATURE IN FRANCE

BY

CHARLES BEARD, B.A.

"Il ne faut pas croire, comme dit un grand Saint, que le soleil ne luise que dans
la cellule."
Lancelot

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BOOK I.

EARLY HISTORY AND REFORM OF PORT ROYAL.

PREFACE.

THE following volumes are an attempt to supply to English students a chapter of the History of Christianity heretofore unwritten. The Jansenist controversy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has, both in the subject and the conduct of the debate, a peculiar interest for Protestant readers. But to trace the progress of the quarrel from its origin in the "Augustinus" of Cornelius Jansen to its final extinction in France, and the establishment of that Jansenist Church of Holland which still maintains a precarious existence, would be a difficult, and in some respects, a thankless task; involving the necessity of weaving together the independent histories of French and Flemish Jansenism, and of chronicling an endless succession of wearisome word-combats, and still more wearisome intrigues. The happy chance which grouped all the great French Jansenists round the Cistercian Monastery of Port Royal, not only enables me

to display all the characteristics of Jansenism connection with the fortunes of that communi but lends to the story, the living interest whi the most faithful narration of theological debat necessarily wants. In these pages, which are at lea as much occupied with the delineation of character as with the history of belief, the reader may perh learn something of the peculiar conception of t Christian life entertained by Roman Catholic theol gians, while he also notes the deviations from the general type produced by the singularities Jansen faith. The names of Angélique and Agnès Arnaul of St. Cyran, Singlin, De Saçi, Pavillon, Hamon, repre sent to the few students who have turned the almos forgotten pages in which their virtues are inscribed some of the highest achievements of Christian saint liness; while those of Pascal, Racine, Boileau Arnauld, Nicole, Tillemont, La Rochefoucauld, a familiarly known to all who pretend to an acquain tance with French literature in its palmiest day. to the lovers of genius and holiness my book pro unattractive, the fault will lie at the door of the pr sumptuous artist who has chosen a subject, which, its noble outline and subtle interchange of light and shade, mocks his ineffectual pencil.

The credit of having rescued this subject from the

neglect of almost a century belongs to Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, whose interesting "Memoirs," first published in 1829, issued from the press in a fifth edition when the present work was far on its way to completion. But the fact that Mrs. Schimmelpenninck's work is rather the reproduction of selected materials for the History of Port Royal than a complete and connected narrative; the neglect, necessitated by its plan, of many social and literary aspects of the subject, as well as the minute and fruitful research which French scholars have of late years made into all that concerns Port Royal, seemed to justify the fresh and more elaborate treatment of the story of French Jansenism which I have attempted to give. It still remains a singular and honourable circumstance, that an English lady should have led the way in the modern investigation of a most important period in the history of religion and literature in France.

I cannot sufficiently express my obligations to M. Ste Beuve's admirable work on Port Royal, which, begun in 1840, has only been completed in the present year. My work, like his, is based upon the original memoirs, and I have frequently taken a different view of characters and events. But M. Ste Beuve's extraordinary acquaintance with the literature of the subject, his diligent use of MS. authorities,

and the varied illustrations which his extensive and accurate learning enables him to draw from other than Jansenist sources, necessarily make the foreign student of Port Royal dependent upon his work for much that he cannot find elsewhere. The particulars of my debt to M. St^e Beuve are accurately stated in the foot notes.

The chapter on Pascal embodies in a complete and continuous narrative all the new information discovered by M. Victor Cousin and his assistants in this work. In this respect I may claim some pre-eminence over M. St^e Beuve, the part of whose work relating to Pascal was published before M. Cousin's "Report" had excited so great an interest in all that relates to the author of the "Provincial Letters" and "Thoughts." It is right, also, to say that I have drawn most valuable materials, to which I could otherwise have found access with great difficulty, if at all, from the numerous volumes in which M. Victor Cousin delineates, with facile and elegant pen, French society in the eighteenth century

I cannot avoid acknowledging the kindness of the Rev. R. Aitken, of Pendean, Cornwall, the present possessor of the collection of books on Port Royal formed by the late Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, who placed in my hands the rare and valuable volume of

pamphlets, quoted under the title of "Divers Actes;" and of J. Badley, Esq., of Dudley, to whom I am indebted for the loan of Hanon's "Autobiography."

I need hardly say that the treatment of any phase of Catholic religious life presents peculiar difficulties to a Protestant historian. For a statement of the spirit in which I have met and sought to overcome them, I refer the reader to the work itself, and especially to the brief Epilogue which I have added to the narrative. If my book, which is no more than a simple, and, as far as may be, a truthful, record of events and character, is at all successful in showing the identity of the Spirit of God throughout its many "diversities of operations" in Christian churches, its object will have been attained.

C. B.

Gee Cross, Manchester: December, 1860.

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„	32,	„	31,	„	1605	„ 1604.
„	90,	„	30,	„	1612	„ 1618.
„	129,	„	26,	„	1678	„ 1630.
„	172,	„	5,	„	14th Dec.	„ 4th Dec.
„	285,	„	21,	„	1860	„ 1660.
„	298,	„	13,	„	1652	„ 1651.
„	304,	„	13,	„	1061	„ 1660.
„	353,	„	35,	„	8th Oct.	„ 4th Oct.
„	381,	„	1,	„	1665	„ 1664.

I.

THE subject of the present work is the history of the Monastery of Port Royal, and of its influence upon religion and literature in France, from 1602, the year in which Angélique Arnauld became abbess, to 1713, the date of its final destruction. As a necessary preliminary to this narrative, I design to trace, in the first chapter of this book, the early history of the monastery; and, in the second, to give a brief account of the numerous and remarkable family of Arnauld, so intimately connected with the story of its prosperity, its literary glory, and its undeserved calamities.

The Monastery of Port-Royal was founded in the year 1204. Matthieu, first Lord of Marli, of the house of Montmorenci, being about to depart upon the crusade proclaimed by Innocent III., and in the year 1200 preached in France by Foulques de Neuilly, left at the disposal of his wife, Mathilde de Garlande, and of her kinsman Eudes de Sully, Bishop of Paris, a rentcharge of fifteen livres, to be devoted by them to such pious purposes as they might think fit. The religious usages of the age, the known prepossessions of the bishop, and the pious zeal of the house of Montmorenci, to which many monastic establishments in the diocese of Paris owed their origin, directed the application of this sum to the foundation of a monastery. Accordingly we find that, by a deed bearing the date of 1204, the Sieur Guillaume de la Ferté transferred to Mathilde and her episcopal co-trustee a fief situated "en Porrois," in a valley near Chevreuse, six leagues to the westward of Paris. A second

deed, executed in 1206, recites, that the fifteen livres assigned by Matthieu de Marli were in that year bestowed upon the church of Porrois as a perpetual endowment, as well as a yearly allowance of wheat, amounting perhaps to some fifty quarters, the separate gift of Mathilde. It is certain that in the annals of the monastery the honours due to a founder are divided between the Lady of Marli and the Bishop of Paris.

The name Port Royal, which the courtly etymology of a later age connected with a supposed visit of Philip Augustus to a chapel of St. Laurence, which had long existed upon the spot, is, in reality, a form, modified in all probability by transmission through a Latin medium, of the original Porrois.* Some antiquaries have sought to derive this word from the leek or onion (*Porrum*), with which the place abounds; others, with more appearance of truth, trace it to the word Porra, or Borra, which is defined to mean, in the corrupt Latinity of the middle ages, "a hole covered with brambles, and partly filled with stagnant water." Nor is this an inaccurate description of the spot. The monastery was situated in a valley, the abrupt sides of which were clothed with almost impenetrable brushwood. A pool, ordinarily on a somewhat higher level than the bottom of the valley, often overflowed into it, and caused by its exhalations those contagious diseases which more than once decimated the monastery, and finally occasioned its removal to Paris. Draining, and the progress of cultivation, have now deprived the valley of Port Royal of all claim to be considered "a frightful and savage desert;"

* In a deed of the year 1216. we find for the first time the phrase "de Portu Regio." Other translations of Porrois, which finally gave way to the above, are Porretum, Porrasium, Porregium. The pious fancy of the Port Royalists did not fail to find an analogy between the names of Hippo Regius, the seat of St. Augustine's bishopric, and of their own monastery, so conspicuous for its sufferings in the cause of Augustinian theology,

yet, with every allowance for the distaste manifested by the mediæval mind for what modern Europe calls the picturesque it is not difficult to believe the assertion of its hermits, that even in the seventeenth century, it offered to the citizen of Paris or Versailles, no very inviting retreat.

History, by help of Peter, monk of the Abbey des Vaux de Sernai, who wrote a narrative of the crusade against the Albigeois, has preserved one trait of the foundress of Port Royal, which is no less characteristic of her age than of herself. In the year 1210, Count Simon de Montfort was besieging the town of Ménerbe, and had almost reduced it to submission. While the negotiation for surrender was actually in progress, arrived the Abbot of Citeaux, who, as head of the great Cistercian order, was one of the most powerful ecclesiastics of France. To him was referred the fate of the besieged; upon which the abbot was sorely perplexed, greatly desiring the destruction of the Lord's enemies, and yet, as monk and priest, not daring to condemn them to death. So he craftily caused the treaty to come to naught; and when the town surrendered at discretion, and Count Simon referred all things to him, he decided that all within the castle, gentle and simple, who were willing to be reconciled to Holy Church, should escape the penalty of death. Whereat one Robert de Mauvoisin, a zealous Catholic, murmured greatly, and resisted the abbot to his face, fearing lest the heretics should feign conversion in order to save themselves. But the abbot assured him that he knew well what he was doing, and that very few, if any, would declare themselves converted. Which in effect came to pass; for when the Catholic army, singing "Te Deum," entered the city, and had celebrated Christ's victory by planting the cross upon the highest pinnacle of the church, the Abbot des Vaux de Sernai began to exhort the heretics, who nevertheless refused to listen to his admonitions, crying out, "Why preachest thou to us? we will

have none of thy faith." "There were of obstinate heretics," says the monk Peter, "more than one hundred and forty. The besiegers made a great fire, and threw them into it — or rather, there was no need to do so, for these devils rushed in of their own accord. Three women, nevertheless, escaped, whom the noble lady, mother of Bouchard de Marli, rescued from the fire, and succeeded in reconciling with the Catholic Church. The obstinate heretics having thus passed through the fire, those who remained abjured their heresy, and were reconciled to the Church." Strange that the history of Port Royal should thus begin and end in the persecution of women! The Jesuit advisers of Louis XIV. in 1710, might seem to have been animated by the Cistercian abbot of five hundred years before.*

It is needless, at this distance of time, to speculate upon the motives which may have induced Mathilde de Garlande and Eudes de Sully to plant a sisterhood of nuns at Port Royal; or to trace the steps by which the convent passed from the jurisdiction of the diocesan to that of the Abbot of Citeaux. The secluded valley corresponded indeed with the situation of many Bernardine monasteries†, and the pious ardour of a young community naturally inclined towards the severities of the Cistercian rule. Yet it is doubtful whether, during the first years of their conventual life, the nuns of Port Royal were directly subject to the Abbot of Citeaux, or to the Bishop of Paris, or to the neighbouring monastery des Vaux de Sernai, whose abbot appears to have exercised some of the rights of superior. It seems certain that when Thibault, grandson of Mathilde de Garlande, was abbot of that monastery about 1235, he took a

* Ste. Beuve, Port Royal, vol. i. p. 44.

† The following verses, which are often quoted, are descriptive:

"Bernardus valles; colles Benedictus amabat;
Oppida Franciscus; magnas Ignatius urbes."

peculiar interest in the neighbouring foundation; so that a small building in the outer court of the convent was, to the last, known as the lodging of St. Thibault, and carefully preserved as a memorial of his many visits. We are informed by documentary evidence, however, that in 1214, Pierre de Nemours, Bishop of Paris, granted to the nuns of Port Royal the right of electing an abbess, in virtue of which the first abbess, Eremberge, was chosen in the following year. In 1223 the work of founding the new monastery was, as it were, completed by a special bull issued by Honorius III., who granted to it the right of celebrating the holy office, even though the whole country should lie under interdict. Another privilege accorded to Port Royal by the same instrument, — that, namely, of receiving persons who wished to retire from the world,—seems to anticipate, in a remarkable manner, the destinies of the community in the seventeenth century. In 1229, the convent church, dedicated to the Virgin, the universal patron of the age, was consecrated; having been erected by Robert de Luzarches, better known as the architect of part of the cathedral of Amiens. By this time also, the bounty of the faithful, always easily excited in favour of a new object, had begun to flow in. Simon de Montfort was one of the earliest benefactors of Port Royal, and his example was followed, among many less illustrious imitators, by St. Louis himself.

To trace the history of the community of Port Royal through all the monotonous and minute detail of monastic life down to the period when the energetic hands of Angélique Arnauld grasped the abbatial crozier, would be an unprofitable task, even were it of possible accomplishment. The names of a few superiors of the monastery, whose names alone have escaped forgetfulness; a brief record of various benefactors, arranged in a species of calendar, according to the day of their respective deaths; this is nearly

all which remains to us of the story of Port Royal during the first four centuries of its existence. The only abbesses who at all claim our notice are two, aunt and niece, each bearing the name of Jeanne de la Fin. The first of these was at the head of the community during no fewer than forty-five years, from 1468 to 1513, and survived by ten years the abdication of her dignity. The second reigned almost as long, completing her forty-fifth year of power within a few months. But the niece, if we may trust her epitaph (which concludes with the punning verse so characteristic of the taste of the time, *Finis coronat opus*), was memorable in the conventual annals for more than the duration of her sway. She recovered alienated lands; repaired the church; rebuilt the belfry, cloisters, dormitory, and infirmary; adorned the choir with costly stalls, and conferred upon the community other benefits, too many to be enumerated. To her succeeded Catherine de la Vallée; who was followed, in 1575, by Jeanne de Boulehart. The latter had, at the request of the Abbot of Citeaux, accepted as her coadjutrix Jacqueline Marie Arnauld, then only between seven and eight years of age, yet who, at the death of her senior in 1602, became the legal head of the house.

So far as we are able to gain any insight into the inner history of Port Royal during this long period, it presents the spectacle of a gradual degeneration from the ascetic piety of the Cistercian rule. It is by no means impossible that some of the original benefactors, or even inmates of the monastery, might, as children, have spoken to St. Bernard, the second founder of the Cistercian order; and we may reasonably suppose, that in the ardour of its first devotion, this was not inferior to most newly founded religious houses. But there are many causes, in addition to the common inconstancy of human nature, which will account for the gradual relaxation at Port Royal of the ancient severity of life: the English invasions of the fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries; the wars of the League in the sixteenth; and the consequent convulsion of every order of civil society, could not be without effect on the pious asceticism, which cannot endure exposure to the rude winds of common life. We possess three curious documents which throw considerable light upon the internal condition of the monastery in the sixteenth century. They are entitled "Cartes de Visite," and are the admonitory records of certain visitations made to Port Royal by its ecclesiastical superior, the Abbot of Citeaux. The first of these is dated December 23rd, 1504, the elder Dq la Fin being abbess, and the visiting abbot, Jacques de Pontarlier, accompanied by the head of the neighbouring monastery des Vaux de Sernai. It appears, in the first place, that the nuns were in the habit of hurrying over indecorously the "hours" of their patroness the Virgin, and they are especially enjoined to make longer and more regular pauses between the verses, and to sing at equal length equal notes and syllables. And as the hours of Divine Service seem hitherto to have been decided at hap-hazard, the abbess is desired to procure a clock before St. John's Day. The dormitory is not fit for the accommodation of the nuns; and till it is complete, it will be impossible to enforce with becoming rigour the practice of monastic seclusion, from which great inconvenience may easily arise. The confessional is to be so arranged, that the confessor may be in the church on one side of the partition wall, and the penitent in the oratory on the other, while the window between shall be filled with a close trellis, over which a waxed cloth is to be stretched. The abbess is in future to receive or lodge no male guests in the room called the guest-chamber, which is next to the nuns' sleeping-room, for which reason it will be advisable to erect some building out of the cloister in which to entertain such secular persons as may chance to come. After Compline, all the nuns are immediately to assemble in the

dormitory, which they are not afterwards to quit without the express permission of the abbess. The threat of excommunication is fulminated against all who are guilty of "the enormous and execrable vice" of possessing private property; and all and sundry are commanded, before a fixed day, to give up to the abbess whatever they may possess, which can in any sense be called their own. And never more is any nun to use "that wicked and damnable fashion of speech," *my* mantle, *my* robe, *my* knife; but is on all occasions to say, *our* or *yours*. Moreover, as not only the nuns, but the abbess herself, have so far yielded to the fashion of the day, as to widen their sleeves from the elbow downwards, they are strictly enjoined so to narrow the said sleeves, as to make them every one of equal width, and to take care that the folds of the same shall not exceed three fingers in breadth. The abbess is to remain constantly in the monastery, and not to permit the sisters to quit it without license from the visitor. The nuns again are not to write, or receive letters, or send messages without the knowledge of the abbess, and are bidden to keep out of the kitchen more than they hitherto have done. The document concludes by pointing out and enforcing the relative duties of sisters and superior.

The second Carte de Visite is dated September 17, 1572, and records the visit of Abbot Nicholas Boucherat to the Abbess Catherine de la Vallée. The injunctions of 1504, as to the decent and orderly performance of Divine Service, appear to have been neglected or forgotten, for they are here repeated. The nuns are commanded to partake of the Holy Eucharist every fortnight, after having received absolution from the confessor of the convent. Regularity in the internal management of the monastery is recommended: hours are fixed for the various services in the church: and the abbess is especially ordered to lock up the nuns in their dormitory. The superior is also more strictly forbidden

either to go out of the monastery herself, or to permit her nuns to do so; and no male person is on any pretext to be admitted within the conventual precincts. Peculiarities of dress, or in the manner of arranging the hair, are to be avoided; and the sick are to receive better attendance than heretofore.

The result showed that Madame Catherine de la Vallée was not particularly amenable to ecclesiastical discipline. Sixteen months after the date of his first visit, the Abbot of Citeaux reappeared at Port Royal, and in a Carte de Visite, dated February 1st, 1574, renewed his former admonitions. The abbess, unwilling to give way, retired from the field, and, resigning her office, betook herself to the nunnery of Colinance. Her successor, Jeanne de Boulehart, the immediate predecessor of Angélique Arnauld, is recorded to have administered the affairs of the monastery with decency and moderation, repressing all glaring scandals, but introducing no essential reforms. This difficult task was reserved for the zeal and self-devotion of her successor.*

* For a very minute account of all that is known of Port Royal before its reform, the reader is referred to the "Mémoires historiques et chronologiques sur l'Abbaye de Port Royal des Champs." Utrecht, 1758. By the Abbé Guilbert. Part I. vol i., usually numbered vol. viii. in the complete series.

II.

THE family of Arnauld appears at the close of the twelfth century to have been settled in Provence, whence the branch which afterwards became so closely linked with the fortunes of Port Royal, is said to have emigrated to Auvergne.* It is needless to attempt to trace, with some enthusiastic admirers of Port Royal, the history of the family through the centuries in which it maintained a respectable place among the petty nobility of this remote province. One of them, Michael Arnauld, originated the reputation of his family for longevity, by living to the age of 104 years. His son, Henri, was governor of the little town and fortress of Hermant, in Upper Auvergne, and ruined himself by affording an asylum to his former friend and patron, the Constable de Bourbon, in the days of his disgrace. The son of Henri, Antoine de la Mothe Arnauld, so called from an estate near Riom, is the first member of his family with whom it is necessary that we should become more minutely acquainted.†

Antoine de la Mothe, fully endowed with the strength of will and versatility of talent characteristic of so many of his descendants, found the provincial world of Auvergne too narrow for the display of his energy, and therefore removed to Paris. Here he became the founder of what was then

* The name, originally spelled Arnaud, appears to have taken its present form from the Latin Arnaldus. The Jesuits, in the later days of the Jansenist controversy, delighted to derive the name of their great antagonist, Dr. Antoine Arnauld, from the root ἀρνοῦμαι, I deny.

† Mémoires d'Arnauld d'Andilly (Michaud and Poujoulat's Collection, vol. ix.), p. 405.

called a Parliamentary family: though it is a significant token both of the disturbed state of France, and of the martial propensities of his race, that we find him by turns commander of a troop of light horse, and Procureur-Général to Catherine de Medicis.* We must suppose that his legal abilities alone elevated him to the latter post; for, as the Jesuits sedulously published, and the Jansenists as sedulously strove to conceal, he was a Huguenot. This was a blot in the theological escutcheon of the Arnaulds, which their bitter and unscrupulous opponents took care should never be effaced or forgotten. He died, nevertheless, as his grandson, M. Arnauld d'Andilly, is careful to inform us, in the purity of the Catholic faith, owing his conversion, it may be, to the rough arguments of the day of St. Bartholomew. For being attacked in his house on that terrible night, like all his fellow Protestants, he owed his safety to the resolute defence, which with the help of his household, he made against the murderers, thus allowing time for the arrival of a guard, which the Queen Mother, tardily bethinking herself of her servant's danger, had sent to conduct him to a place of safety. He died in 1585, having been twice married. By his first wife he had one son, by the second seven sons and four daughters. And it is a noteworthy fact, that every one of his eight sons achieved distinction in the service of his country.†

* The following illustrative anecdote is related of M. de la Mothe in the memoirs of his grandson, D'Andilly (p. 406). In defending, on some occasion, in the courts of law, the rights of his royal client, he incurred the resentment of a certain haughty and passionate nobleman, whose name is not preserved. On leaving the court he was addressed in insolent terms by this person, who threatened to make him repent his conduct. "You take me for some one else," quietly replied M. de la Mothe. "How so? Have you not yourself told me but now that you were M. de la Mothe?" "Yes," answered he, "but I lengthen and shorten my robe as I please, and at the bottom of this staircase you would not dare to speak to me as you do." The matter was pursued no farther.

† Mém. d'Andilly, p. 406.

His eldest son, Jean de la Mothe, was a soldier and a traveller, who served Henri IV. against the League with chivalric bravery and self-devotion, and finally fell a victim to a feud, which, in the discharge of military duty, he had contracted with the house of La Rochefoucauld. Of the second, Antoine Arnauld, we shall have presently to speak more at length. The third brother, Isaac, was Intendant of Finance under Henri IV., and completely possessed the confidence of that great prince, whose unhappy end alone prevented his elevation to the dignity of superintendant. The fourth son, David, held the office of Contrôleur-Général des Restes. The fifth, Benjamin, was killed at an early age at the siege of Gergeau, in 158[illegible]. The sixth, Claude, though only twenty-seven years of age at his death in 1602, was already Trésorier-Général at Paris, and was about to be elevated to the office of Secretary of State. Louis, the seventh, though decidedly inferior in ability to the rest of his family, was also Contrôleur-Général des Restes, and superintended, during many years, the application of large sums to the construction and maintenance of bridges in France. Pierre, the eighth and youngest, applied himself to the military art, and but for his untimely death, might have rendered the name of Arnauld as illustrious in the warlike as it is in the literary annals of his country. He appears to have devoted himself to his profession with no common ardour. In 1611, the city of Geneva, anticipating a siege, which however never took place, appointed Pierre Arnauld to a considerable command. Thence he proceeded to Livonia, to serve under Gustavus Adolphus, by whom he is said to have been held in particular esteem. It was, however, at the celebrated siege of Rochelle, which Cardinal Richelieu brought to a triumphant conclusion, that he displayed the remarkable fortitude and skill, which earned for him the promise of a marshal's staff. He is known in the memoirs of the time as M. Arnauld du Fort, from a work

called Fort St. Louis which he erected against Rochelle, and which was at last the means of compelling the surrender of the town in 1629, five years after the death of the brave engineer from the fatigues and disappointments of the siege. From the names of Scriptural derivation borne by many of these remarkable brothers, as well as from the fact, that Claude Arnauld was buried in the Huguenot cemetery "behind St. Sulpice," * it has been conjectured that the taint of Protestantism in the family was not confined to the father, Antoine de la Mothe. And, indeed, it is rather in the restless energy of character, and quick determination of will, than in any superabundance of Catholic or ascetic zeal, that we can trace a relationship between these elder members of the Arnauld family, and Angélique or the Doctor Antoine.

We return now to Antoine Arnauld, the second of this numerous race. He was born in the year 1560, being the first child of his father's second marriage. As the eldest son, Jean de la Mothe, had chosen the profession of arms, Antoine succeeded to his father's office of Procureur-Général to the Queen Mother, and to more than his father's success as an advocate. His eloquence is said to have won for him the favourable notice of M. Marion, then a very distinguished pleader and afterwards Avocat-Général, who gave him, in consequence, the hand of his only daughter, Catherine. The marriage, which is described as one of perfect happiness, took place in 1685; and the bride, then only twelve years of age, brought to her husband the estate of Andilly, from which their eldest son derived his name, and a house in Paris, long afterwards

* Reuchlin: Geschichte von Port Royal, vol. i. p. 13. Tallemant des Reaux expressly states that several of the Arnaulds of this generation were Protestants. As he was their contemporary, and however rancorous, shows no sign of any specially Jesuit rancour, his testimony may be accepted. Historiettes, vol. iv. pp. 53—74.

inhabited by their grandson, the Marquis de Pomponne. In course of time she presented him with no less than twenty children, of whom ten arrived at years of maturity.*

M. Marion, the grandfather of La Mère Angélique, for whom his influence with Henri IV. procured her abbacy of Port Royal, was a note-worthy man, otherwise than in connection with our subject. He was in his day the leader of the French bar, a man of whom Cardinal du Perron said, that, "since the days of Cicero there had been no such advocate as he." His epitaph, written by the same friendly pen, is worth quoting, if only to point the moral of the transitory triumphs of eloquence:

> "Sous ce tombeau, paré de mainte sorte
> D'honneurs muets, gît l'eloquence morte:
> Car Marion, du sénat l'ornement
> Et du barreau le miracle suprême,
> Ne fut le nom d'un homme seulement,
> Mais c'est le nom de l'eloquence même." †

May it not be asserted, without much fear of contradiction, that few of the present generation, even in France, have ever heard of M. l'Avocat-Général Marion?

Not less celebrated in its own day was the eloquence of Antoine Arnauld, and equally forgotten, except in the faint echo of its tones, which we seem to hear in the voices of his more celebrated children. Yet so numerous and lucrative were his professional engagements, especially in the capacity of legal adviser to many royal and noble persons, that he refused the offers of place and promotion pressed upon him by his powerful clients, preferring the influence and emolument afforded him by the exercise of

* Mém. d'Andilly, p. 407. Guilbert, Mém. Histor. sur P. R., vol. viii. p. 211 *et seq.* A memoir of Mad. Arnauld, by her eldest daughter, is to be found in the Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de P. R. et à la Vie de la Mère Angélique, vol. iii. p. 275 *et seq.*

† Reuchlin, vol. i. p. 30.

his profession to the offices of Auditeur des Comptes, Avocat-Général, or President of the Parliament of Provence, all of which were successively within his reach. Many are the *causes célèbres* in which he was engaged; trials from which all human interest has evaporated as completely as the orator's voice has died away into forgetfulness. "Every one knows," says M. d'Andilly*, with pardonable pride, "that the presentations of officers of the crown (*i.e.* to the Parliament of Paris), such as constables, admirals, dukes, and marshals of France, are the greatest efforts of eloquence, inasmuch as they are of that demonstrative and sublime species which ought to contain only what is elevated, illustrious, and noble; and because, in this department, success can be attained only by a masterpiece, such as the panegyric on Trajan by Pliny, which is rightly considered a wonder of antiquity. Now, my deceased father himself pronounced fourteen of these orations, while all the other members of the 'palais' together have only spoken eleven or twelve." And he goes on to tell, that, at the presentation of the Duc de la Trimouille, of whom Henri IV. said, that at the battle of Ivry he had been more valiant than himself, "by the length of his horse," M. Arnauld's description of his client's exploits was so vivid, that the Duc de Montpensier, who was present, unconsciously drew his sword half out of its scabbard.

The speech, however, by which Antoine Arnauld is best known, is his "Plaidoyer pour l'Université contre les Jesuites," which has been well denominated "the original sin of the Arnaulds." It is indeed remarkable, that long before the reformation of Port Royal, the head of the family —who certainly did not sympathise with his children's ascetic piety—should have laid the foundation of the inexorable feud, which was to rage between them and the Society of Jesus for more than a century. The immediate

* Mém p. 408.

occasion of the speech was the attempt made, in 1593, upon the life of Henri IV., by Pierre Barrière, who confessed that he had been instigated by the Jesuits. The University of Paris, which for thirty years had been engaged in resisting the encroachments of the order, aided by the *curés* of the metropolis, who also complained of its interference with their functions, demanded of the Parliament that the Jesuits should be expelled from France. Each of the parties to this momentous suit appeared by counsel, and the University was represented by Antoine Arnauld. The effect produced by his eloquence is said to have been prodigious: the judges half raised themselves from their seats; the people, whom the influence of the Jesuits had excluded from the court, listened eagerly at the closed doors. And when the accomplished advocate declared that the consciousness of exertion in so good a cause was the only reward which he could accept, the University passed a decree, couched in terms of the most courteous eulogy, by which it bound itself in all future time to perform to M. Arnauld and his posterity every good office which it was possible for grateful clients to render to a faithful patron. Nevertheless it would be impossible for any but the enthusiastic antiquary to read the 140 pages which contain this masterpiece of eloquence. Furious invective, turgid declamation, trite classical allusion, outrageous apostrophe, are the characteristics of the style. "What tongue, what voice," asks the orator, "can suffice to express the secret counsels, the conspiracies more horrible than those of the Bacchanals, more dangerous than that of Cataline, which have been concocted in their college Rue St. Jacques, and in their church Rue St. Antoine?"* Yet there can be no doubt that Arnauld was terribly in earnest, however strange, and even ludicrous, may appear to us the expression of his earnest-

* Quoted by Guilbert, vol. viii. p. 225.

ness. The phrases in which one age utters its deepest convictions are often profaned to the uses of schoolboy declamation in the next.

The speech wanted, however, one great and convincing testimony to its merits: the advocate did not gain his cause. The trial was adjourned, which the University rightly regarded as a defeat: and the Jesuits were not expelled till after the unsuccessful attempt of Jean Chatel upon the king's life, Dec. 27, 1594. At the same time, they never forgot the orator who had so excited against them the whirlwind of popular indignation; and the Plaidoyer of Antoine Arnauld, as well as the abjured heresies of his father, were constantly adduced to show that the family which formed so strong a bulwark of Jansenism, had never been altogether sound in the faith. Antoine Arnauld died in 1619. With his children and grandchildren, we shall become familiar in the course of this work. It only remains to enumerate them, that they may fall into their places in this general view of the family.

The eldest son of Antoine Arnauld and Catherine Marion was Robert Arnauld d'Andilly, so called from the estate which formed part of his mother's dowry. Though no unsuccessful courtier, and one who had the opportunity of rising to high dignities of state, under Louis XIII., "he was a man," said the celebrated Balzac, "who, possessing both the moral and the Christian virtues, was neither vain of the one, nor ashamed of the other."* Yet perhaps no event of his public life created so wide a sensation as his retirement to the solitudes of Port Royal des Champs, where he spent the last thirty years of his life, partly in exercises of piety, and partly in the composition of his numerous works, which were published after his death in eight folio volumes. With the exception of certain memoirs,

* Preface to d'Andilly's Mém., p. 403.

from which our knowledge of the elder members of the Arnauld family is chiefly derived, these consist of translations from the fathers, lives of the saints, and such other tasks as were assigned to him by his ecclesiastical superiors. He died in 1674, at the patriarchal age of eighty-six, the father of no less than fifteen children, of whom seven died in childhood. The eldest of the survivors, Antoine, Abbé des Chaumes, is known to the student of French history as the author of memoirs bearing his name. The second son, Simon, Marquis de Pomponne, was not the least distinguished of Louis XIV.'s ministers; and, by his administrative talents, retained a place in the King's council and esteem long after the name of Arnauld, as borne by every other member of the family, had become hateful to him. The third son, Charles Henri de Luzançi, died a hermit in Port Royal. All of the five daughters were nuns of that house, and one of them, on whom the mantle of her aunts seemed to have fallen, was renowned in the conventual annals as the Abbess Angélique de St. Jean.

The second child of Antoine Arnauld was Catherine, married in 1605 to Isaac le Maître, Maître des Requêtes, but who was afterwards separated from her husband, and died a nun in Port Royal. One of her sons, Antoine le Maître, acquired celebrity at once as the most brilliant advocate of his day, and as the first of the Port Royal hermits. Another, Isaac de Saçi, is well known to theologians as the author of the best translation of the Scriptures into the French language. Of the remaining children of Antoine Arnauld, Jacqueline will become known to us as La Mère Angélique, and Jeanne as La Mère Agnès, successive abbesses of Port Royal. Anne, Marie, and Madeleine were all nuns in the same monastery. Simon adopted the profession of arms, and was killed at an early age, at Verdun. Henri, Bishop of Angers, displayed to the corrupt episcopacy of France a noble example of devotion to duty,

and in their time of need, lent the weight of his name and station to the persecuted sisterhood of Port Royal. But their chief champion was the youngest of this numerous household, the celebrated Antoine Arnauld, Doctor of the Sorbonne, the story of whose wonderful literary activity, and steady persistence in a good cause, will form no inconsiderable portion of our narrative.

III.

THE story of Port Royal, as a source of religious life and literary activity in France, begins with the abbacy of Jacqueline Marie Arnauld, better known in the theological annals of the age as La Mère Angélique. Forced by considerations of domestic policy into the monastic life, and at first unwilling to undertake its obligations, she soon became impatient of their conventional fulfilment; and the strength of her character won its earliest triumph in imposing upon the nuns under her charge, the rigorous obedience to the Cistercian rule, which she was herself the first to practise. Nor was the triumph transitory. Her rare administrative powers perpetuated the reform which her stern conscientiousness had inaugurated; and to the last days of its conventual existence, poverty, seclusion, silence, rigid self-denial, and unsparing beneficence constituted the rule of life at Port Royal. The search for an adequate director of her conscience brought her into friendly intercourse with many of the most distinguished theologians of the day; while it is owing to her peculiarly intimate connection with St. Cyran, the friend and fellow-student of Jansen, that the history of Port Royal is the history of the Jansenist controversy. The whole power of the Society of Jesus leagued itself with the absolute authority of the French monarchy, to destroy an insignificant convent of Cistercian nuns, who, submitting themselves to the Holy See in every article of faith, refused to declare that five condemned propositions were contained in a book, which they had never read, and which was written in a language they did not understand.

In defence of Port Royal, Arnauld and Nicole poured forth countless volumes of forgotten controversy, and Pascal wrote the one little volume of Provincial Letters, which never can be forgotten. To its sacred solitudes retired soldiers who wished to make their peace with heaven; statesmen upon whom the sun of court favour had ceased to shine; ladies whose waning charms reminded them of the obligations of piety; grandees, the monotony of whose grandeur palled upon their power of enjoyment. It was here that Racine first learned the power of his pen; and when, in later life, the ascetic impressions of his youth at Port Royal returned, and he began to lament the profane successes of his muse, he drew hence the inspiration which glows in Esther and Athalie. While imprisoned in the Bastille, in the cause of Port Royal, De Saçi accomplished the translation of the Scriptures, which is still one of the monuments of the French tongue; and Tillemont, the historian of the Church, owed to the same source the direction given to his genius. In support of the persecuted monastery, the caustic wit of Boileau did not spare even Louis le Grand: and Madame de Sevigné gossips pleasantly on the holy peacefulness of its retreats. And the varied fortunes of the house, now saved by a miracle, and now by a pasquinade; protected now by the court influence of repentant duchesses; and now by the conspicuous virtues of saintly bishops; enlivened now by many gleams of the inextinguishable gaiety of France, and now attracting a deeper interest by the most patient fortitude, the most heroic truthfulness, the sublimest faith in duty and in God,—make up a story which illustrates, aptly enough, the heights of attainment and depths of degradation, of which human nature is capable.

Jacqueline Marie*, the second daughter and third child of

* Guilbert, vol. viii. pp. 207—309, diligently collects every particular of the early life of Angélique and Agnès Arnauld. The three volumes of Mé-

Antoine Arnauld and Catherine Marion, was born, probably at Paris, September 8th, 1591. Her sister, Jeanne Catherine, during so many years the companion of her labours and her fame, first saw the light on the last day of the year 1593. In either case the events of mature life did not belie the promise of early years. The little Jacqueline attracted, by the liveliness of her talents and the premature decision of her character, the favour of her grandfather: and her mother, perplexed perhaps by the demands which a continually increasing family made upon her time, habitually sent her to pass the greater part of the day with M. Marion. In this arrangement the child thought she perceived a want of affection towards herself, which attached her the more to the kind old man who took such evident pleasure in her society; and she was accustomed, in after years, to tell how indignantly she often bade her sisters to remain at their own home, and leave her to the sole enjoyment of her grandfather's love. If, as La Mère Angélique asserted throughout life, she really attracted less than a due share of parental love, the fact may account for her early destination to the convent; and M. Marion's partiality may naturally have engaged him to make the monastic life as little repulsive to his favourite as possible. It was indeed time for the Arnauld family to use whatever opportunities presented themselves for the advantageous settlement of their children. In the first few years of married life five daughters and two sons had followed each other in quick succession; and in despair of endowing each of his girls with such a portion as should ensure her a respectable match, the father's thoughts

moires pour servir à l'Histoire de Port Royal have a particular reference to Angélique; and the first volume contains a very interesting autobiography which only extends from the reform to the year 1638. The first letter in her collected correspondence is however dated 1620; and the series is uninterrupted till her death in 1661.

naturally turned to the Church and M. Marion's influence with the King. The eldest daughter was reserved for an unhappy marriage: for Jacqueline and Jeanne the grandfather undertook to provide. The former was but seven years old when it was proposed to her to take the veil; and M. Marion, apprehensive of a quick refusal, took care to add, that she should not be a simple nun, but abbess and mistress of all the rest. At first, she tells us, she was thoroughly discontented with the proposal, and envied her sister Catherine the gay life which would probably ensue on her marriage; but after a while the feeling of necessity and the prospect of power and station had their effect, and she promised compliance. Jeanne, on the contrary, ran to her grandfather with a request that she might not be made abbess. "For I have heard," she said, "that abbesses render account to God of the souls of their nuns, and my own is enough for me." "But I *will* be abbess, grandpapa," pursued Jacqueline, "and will take care that my nuns do their duty." In that word spoke the future reformer of Port Royal.*

The abbot of Citeaux, M. Lacroix, conceived that to anticipate the wishes of the King's Avocat-Général and trusty servant was to further his own interest, and so used all his influence to induce the abbess of Port Royal, Madame Jeanne Boulehart, to receive as her coadjutrix and successor this child of seven years old. About the same time the abbey of St. Cyr became vacant, and appeared to be a suitable provision for the little Jeanne. And on June 23rd, 1599, the good-natured King acceded to the wishes of his minister, and issued letters patent conferring these benefices on the children. In the case of Port Royal there was no difficulty, as it was imagined that the abbess might survive until Jacqueline was old enough to assume her autho-

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 8. Guilbert, vol. viii. p. 247.

rity legally: while it was provided that at St. Cyr, a sister Du Pont should take the name and exercise the functions of superior till Jeanne should have attained the age of twenty years. On September 2nd, therefore, the abbot of Citeaux solemnly invested Jacqueline with the habit of a novice, at the convent of St. Antoine des Champs, at Paris; and on St. John's Day in the subsequent year the same ceremony was performed for Jeanne. The two sisters, who had passed the intervening eight months together at St. Cyr, were now separated: the younger remaining in her own convent, while the elder was removed to Maubuisson, one of the wealthiest foundations of the Cistercian order, to be educated in accordance with her future destination.

The childish years of the new abbess of Port Royal were not the only scandal connected with this transaction, which afterwards furnished material for bitter Jesuit comment. Madame d'Estrées, the superior of Maubuisson, under whose superintendence the novice was placed, was a sister of the too fair and famous Gabrielle, the irregularities of whose conduct she more than emulated. To her sister's influence with the King she owed her enviable preferment. She had previously been abbess of Bertaucourt, a religious house near Amiens, where her sister resided with her, and, shame to tell, received the visits of her royal lover. The place of assignation was in many respects inconvenient: its distance from Paris gave opportunity to the wandering inclinations of the King; and Gabrielle entreated him to find for her sister some eligible abbey in the neighbourhood of the capital. She herself indicated Maubuisson, as the object of her wishes; a well-endowed Cistercian house, founded by Blanche of Castille, wife of St. Louis, which, up to that time, had preserved the right of electing its own abbesses for life. Henri, whose goodnature often found it easier to commit a wrong than to say nay to a troublesome petitioner, promised all that was asked of him; and soon after, took

the opportunity of a hunting excursion to pay the abbey a visit, which was received with every demonstration of loyalty and joy. In conversation with the abbess, whose virtues had procured her elevation to the office, he asked, as if by chance, from whom she had received the patent of possession of her abbacy? The unsuspecting nun, seizing, as she thought, a favourable occasion of confirming her election by a royal grant, replied, "Sire, it is for you to give it me, whenever you think fit." "I will consider the matter, Madame l'Abbesse," answered the King, with a smile. And shortly afterwards she was informed that the royal assent to her election was withheld: the necessary bulls were procured from Rome; the King himself brought Madame d'Estrées to Maubuisson; held a chapter; exacted an oath of obedience from the nuns, and formally put her in possession. The sisters gained an easy and a profligate mistress: and La Belle Gabrielle a home at a convenient distance from Paris.*

Such was the woman to whom the religious education of Jacqueline Arnauld was for a time entrusted. At the expiration of the year of noviciate, in September, 1600, she made her full profession as a nun at Bertaucourt, taking, as her monastic appellation, the name of Angélique, under which she became so widely famous. The change was not without a purpose, and reveals a fresh phase of this discreditable transaction. The bulls necessary for the elevation of *Jacqueline* Arnauld to the abbacy of Port Royal had been refused: it was resolved to try whether the Holy See would be less obdurate in the case of *Angélique*, especially as the young lady for whom the documents were now asked was represented as *seventeen* years of age. The good offices of Cardinal D'Ossat, the French ambassador at the Papal Court, were employed: certain services which M. Marion had rendered to Port Royal during the wars of

* Guilbert, vol. viii. p. 257.

religion were recounted: the influence of the Parliament of Paris was invoked to counterbalance the natural hostility of the Jesuits to the Avocat-Général and his son-in-law: till at last the necessary formalities were completed in the spring of 1602. The receipt of the bull was immediately followed by the opportune death of Dame Boulehart; and on the 5th July of the same year, Angélique Arnauld, not yet eleven years of age, was solemnly installed Abbess of Port Royal, by the Vicar-General of the abbot of Citeaux.*

This scandalous infraction of the rules of the Church does not seem to have been in any way redeemed by a peculiar vocation of the young abbess. A natural religiousness may sometimes be observed in a child, the conversion of which into a desire and fitness for conventual life may be conceived possible: a shrinking, almost morbid dread of sin, which from the moment of the earliest development of conscience, seeks safety in retirement and self-abnegation. But all that we know of Angélique's childhood directs us to a very different type of character. Her quick vigorous intellect was mated with a keen conscience, and when once she had outgrown her childish thoughts and wishes, she boldly looked the necessities of her position in the face, and finding herself a nun, the affianced bride of Christ, and a person of authority in the Cistercian order, she resolved not only to perform faithfully her own religious duties, but to compel the nuns under her charge to observe the obligations laid upon them by their vows. Thus when, in the earlier portion of her career, she attracted the friendship of the celebrated Bishop of Geneva, St. Francis de Sales, we are told that he found fault with her manner of life, as somewhat too austere. "My daughter," said he, in his usual figurative style, "would it not be better not to

* Guilbert, vol. viii. pp. 266—277.

catch such great fish, and to catch more of them?" "I told him," she records, "that if I had been set to draw up a rule, I thought that I should have made it less severe; but that as I found myself bound to a severe one, I deemed it my duty to live up to it as strictly as possible." * And there is no reason to believe, that had she been the eldest daughter of her parents, her inclinations would at all have led her to choose the cloister in preference to married life. In that case, too, the name of Angélique Arnauld might have been remembered; yet, perhaps, as one of those too famous women, who have often directed the current of politics, and impressed their mark upon society in France, at the cost of all domestic duty and womanly shame. The first four years of her residence at Port Royal were almost insupportable to her, so great was her aversion to the conventual life. When she was fifteen years old, she even formed the scheme of renouncing her monastic obligations, and taking refuge from the anger of her parents with her Huguenot aunts at Rochelle.† A dangerous illness fortunately intervened to prevent the execution of so wild a project. Her mother hastened to Port Royal in great alarm, and carried her back to Paris, where she received all the attention which the most tender solicitude could suggest. And though no religious thoughts appear to have mingled with the reflections of her sick bed, the experience of an unwonted parental love recalled her to a sense of the duties which she had solemnly undertaken. She pictured to herself the certain grief and shame which her abandonment of the convent must cause to her parents, and was compelled to acknowledge to her own conscience, that young as she was when her vows were taken, she had yet fully understood their meaning. And so she resolved to return to the hateful monotony of her life at Port Royal: with

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 316.
† Ibid., vol. ii. p. 256.

how little of the old Bernardine spirit may be conjectured from her naïve confession, that having been mightily struck with the gay attire of the fashionable visitors who crowded her sick room, she had secretly ordered a pair of whalebone stays, to bring her figure within courtly limits.*

The Cartes de Visite, which have been already cited, may have prepared the reader for the fact, that the community over which our child Abbess was called to preside did not observe the Cistercian rule with an oppressive strictness. The number of professed nuns was twelve, the eldest of whom was only thirty-three years of age. It is to the credit of the youthful sisterhood, that though the discipline of the convent had been indefinitely relaxed under Dame Boulehart, the watchfulness of Madame Arnauld's maternal scrutiny could detect a proved criminality only in the case of one, who was forthwith removed to another monastery. But when it is admitted that life at Port Royal was innocent, no more can be said in its favour. There was no pretence of monastic seclusion. The whole revenue of the foundation was only 6000 livres, and the servants of the house cheated and half-starved the nuns, to support their own peculations. Every sister had her own private property, in defiance of the regulation as to community of goods. In dress they conformed as nearly as might be to the fashions of the day; wearing starched linen, displaying their hair, and using gloves and masks to preserve the complexion. The grossest religious ignorance prevailed; the offices of the church were negligently performed; the hour of matins was postponed from 2 to 4 A.M.; and when the services of the choir were at an end, a game of cards or a walk filled up the day. "The confessor was a Bernardine monk,

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 257.

so ignorant as not to be able to repeat the Lord's Prayer in French. He did not know a word of the Catechism, and never opened any book but his breviary. His amusement was the chase. For more than forty years no sermon had been preached at Port Royal, except at seven or eight professions. The Communion was administered only at the great festivals; and even of these the Purification was excepted, because it was also the time of Carnival, when the whole house was busy in preparing a masquerade, in which the confessor and the servants equally took part."*

A manifest improvement, at least in the decencies of the monastic life, attended the inauguration of the new abbess. If the Arnaulds were far from guiltless of that worldliness, which by filling the convents of France with the victims of a selfish domestic policy, lay at the root of these evils, they were sincerely anxious that their daughters should be preserved from such pollutions as disgraced the cloisters of Maubuisson. While M. Arnauld undertook the supervision of the secular affairs of Port Royal, repaired the buildings, administered the estates, and directed the revenues to their destined purposes, his wife never intermitted her motherly care of the abbess, and spared neither watchfulness nor exhortations to arm her against the temptations of her youth and apparent freedom. A grave and discreet nun, Catherine Dupont, was appointed Prioress, to exercise the functions of Superior, till Angélique should be of canonical age. Another trustworthy person, Madame de Jumeauville, under whom she had passed her noviciate, was transferred from St. Cyr, to be constantly in her company. We even hear that Madame Arnauld took advantage of the illness, to which allusion has already been made, to search her

* Guilbert, vol. viii. p. 208.

daughter's papers at Port Royal, in the expectation of discovering some illicit correspondence, into which her indiscreet youth might have been led. The search, as La Mère Angélique records with pardonable complacency, was entirely fruitless: a sense of duty, too strong to be overcome even by her distaste to the convent, as well as the honourable example of her own family, had preserved her from any greater faults than those of levity.* The offices of the Church were decently performed; and for the rest of the day the abbess joined her nuns in harmless recreation. Books of ancient history, and the ponderous romances of the day, fired by turns the imagination of the girl, now fast becoming a woman. At one time, Plutarch's Lives, that fruitful nurse of great souls and great deeds, engrossed all her attention. Now the coach of old dame Boulehart rumbles from the gates of Port Royal, to fetch the little abbess of St. Cyr to spend the day with her sister: and again good-natured Henri IV., hunting by the convent walls, is greeted by Angélique, clad in full ecclesiastical costume, followed by an attendant band of nuns, and mounted on lofty pattens, to conceal, if possible, the fraudulent representations as to her age. The old aversion to the religious life continues; but when she is somewhat more than fifteen years old, she signs a paper, which her father lays before her, and which she discovers, too late, to be a renewal of her former illegal vows. Still no thought of religion; no knowledge of sacred things; no dream of reform. The only instruction which prepares her for her first Communion, is furnished by a book of prayers, which a poor cobbler lends to the abbess of the nuns, whose shoes he was mending. And in 1605, Nicholas Boucherat, abbot of Citeaux, nephew, perhaps, of him who had striven with the

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p 258.

abbess de la Vallée, inspects Port Royal, and leaves a Carte de Visite, testifying to his entire satisfaction with its discipline, and ordering only that the number of nuns shall be increased to sixteen.

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 269 ; vol. ii. pp. 254—259. Guilbert, vol viii. p. 287.

IV.

THE history of that change of mind and purpose in Angélique Arnauld, which would technically be called her "conversion," affords another proof that the facts of human nature are everywhere the same, however differently theologians may interpret them. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, ... so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The mysterious efficacy of sacraments, the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, the natural force of education and circumstances, are each advanced by opposing schools of theology to account for all cases of deep and permanent religious impression. One church stigmatises as fanatical all conversions which can mark their sudden commencement from a fixed epoch; another denies the presence of Divine Grace in all gradual and imperceptible changes. And yet, perhaps, the historian, who, for a time at least, is elevated above the dogmatic quarrels of the sects, and who, estimating the reality of conversion by the facts of subsequent life, delights to refer all noble deeds to the help of the one Divine Spirit, is able to see how these differences are rather founded on the original constitution of man than correspondent with any limits of sects and churches. Each section of the Christian community, the sacramental as well as the evangelical, can produce its instances of either type of conversion. Sometimes the force of early education, of a naturally trustful and gentle disposition, in combination with the absence of any overmastering temptation, leads the soul, disturbed by no whirlwinds of the inner life, by the still waters and

through the green pastures up to God. Sometimes, again, the most painful experience of the impossibility of self-guidance, of the ultimate wretchedness of self-indulgence, of the hollowness of life without pure motives and immortal hopes, drives the soul through many a storm and over many a billow, to seek peace where alone it can be found. And in the latter case it is usually possible to affix a date to the beginning of the fresh experience. It is easy to remember the moment at which the old life first broke down. The earliest beam of the new light is too blessed to be forgotten. Thus the visions of Colonel Gardiner and of Ignatius Loyola fall into the same category of spiritual facts: the sudden conversions with which the annals of Methodism abound may be compared with those of Francis Borgia the Jesuit, of Antoine le Maître the Jansenist: while lives of uninterrupted holiness—raised to no heights of ecstasy by vision, depressed to no depths of misery by spiritual conflict, such as the Church of England delights to honour in saintly Herbert and pious Ken,—are paralleled in the story of many a monastery where a life of blameless austerity has conducted monk or nun to a death of happy faith.

The Carnival of 1608 was celebrated by the sisterhood of Port Royal with the innocent, if worldly and irregular enjoyment, which has been already described as characteristic of their conventual life. Amusement ceased at the approach of Lent, and the young abbess, compelled to have recourse to her books, unwilling at so solemn a time to occupy herself with romances, and yet dreading to encounter the tediousness of manuals of devotion, applied to Madame de Jumeauville for some pious work which might help to while away the weary season. A book of meditations was given to her, which some capuchin, who had preached at Port Royal during her absence at Paris, had left behind him. For lack of anything more amusing she read it

with attention, and not without some impression produced upon her mind. A few days after, as the evening began to close in, arrived another capuchin, by name Basil, asking leave to preach in the convent church. The hour was unusual, but a sermon was at any time an agreeable break in the monotony of the convent life, and the consent of the abbess was willingly granted. His subject was the humiliation of Christ in his incarnation. How he treated it we know not. Angélique herself ascribes the effect of his discourse upon her mind less to any eloquence of human lips than to the fact that the moment of Divine Grace had now arrived; and at such seasons, a word, a thought, a look, a gesture, the meaning of which is altogether hidden from others, may be sufficient to unseal the fountain of the soul. The hour of the service, the dimly lighted church, the solemn subject, suggesting, in connection with the season of the year, the last sufferings of Christ, the effects of recent illness, may all be adduced by those who love to connect spiritual facts with natural causes, and all accepted by those who see in natural causes only the instruments of God. Be this as it may, a deep and enduring impression was produced. The abbess seems, nevertheless, to have distrusted the personal character of the preacher, who, indeed, afterwards gave evidence of loose morals and unstable faith, and abstained from consulting him as to the new thoughts and wishes which filled her mind. She contented herself with thanking him, in company with one of her nuns, and he went on his way into obscurity, all unconscious of the fire which his words had kindled in the heart of the Church.*

The impression thus made was soon rendered indelible by prayer and meditation. At the ensuing festival of Whitsuntide, another capuchin, Père Bernard, appeared at

* Mém. pour servir, vol. i. pp. 23, 270.

the convent, and by the gravity and even severity of his demeanour conciliated the confidence which the girl abbess had withheld from the younger monk. To him she opened all her soul, and received the fullest encouragement in her desire for conventual reform. It is hardly needful to say that the suggestion of such a design revealed unexpected difficulties; and that the nuns, who were the most regular in the discharge of what they thought their duty, rebelled most stoutly against the introduction of unprecedented rigour. Père Bernard, supported by the ready zeal of the abbess, preached hard things; and the prioress agreed with many more, in thinking that matters were very well as they were. Good advice flowed abundantly from the lips of Dame Dupont. Angélique was very young; the influence of the rigid capuchin would soon pass away; she would become weary of the labours of reform, and then what end of all but irremediable disorder? So the young convert, whose zeal was of that species which is slowly kindled, but once burning consumes the whole life, began to think that the reform of a convent was an arduous task for a girl of seventeen, and that the safer plan to realise her own newly-awakened hopes was to lay down her ill-gotten dignity, and become once more a novice in some well-governed religious house. Then appeared upon the scene yet another capuchin, Père Pacifique, who though really a far less worldly schemer than the outwardly ascetic Bernard, advocated the quieter course of proceeding; and the poor young abbess was tossed to and fro between an imperious sense of duty, and the aversion to self-display, which in great souls often goes before great deeds. The summer was spent in indecisive talk; one or two of the sisterhood being willing to give up anything to please the superior whom they so loved; the prioress and her party hinting, that for those who needed it reform was a good thing, but that the case was not theirs. In the

autumn arrived a long-expected message from M. Arnauld, summoning Angélique to come to him at his country-seat of Andilly; and the visit once anxiously anticipated, was now an object of unmingled dislike and fear. Many strange rumours had reached his ears. A set of fanatical monks had got hold of his daughter, and were imposing upon her naturally pious disposition, for the sake of what they could filch from the revenues of her abbey. She was about to abandon the reputable preferment which had been obtained for her with so much difficulty, and to become a Carmelite, a Feuillantiste, none knew what. She would kill herself by her absurd austerities—why could she not be content with the respectable piety which already satisfied her own family and the public? His paternal fears for her health already had a prejudicial effect upon his own; she would be the cause of his death, he said, if she did not renounce her foolish plans, and return quietly to the wonted performance of her duties. So she returned, sad, yet not wholly discouraged; and M. Arnauld wrote to the excellent prioress, a nun after his own heart, that she would hear no more of Angélique's fanaticism.*

The change in the girl's life was, however, far too sober and practical to be thus summarily obliterated. Her purpose was unaltered, though its execution might be delayed. It is, indeed, remarkable with how little extravagance this turning point in Angélique's existence was marked. Nearly fifty years afterwards she said of herself, that "immediately after the sermon which so touched her conscience, she became very fearful of being left a prey to delusions and visions, and prayed to God that he would deliver her from these perils. To which she added that He had granted her prayer; so that by day, or when awake

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 272—275; vol. ii. p. 263. Guilbert, vol. viii. p. 326.

in the night, she had neither seen nor heard anything; and that whatever she had seen in her sleep, she looked upon as no more than idle fancies."* We hear of no macerations of the flesh, no agonies of self-accusation, no blackness of despair. One of the few remaining incidents of these early days is, that in the middle of the night she was often seen to leave her bed quietly, so as not to disturb the nun who slept with her, and to hasten to a granary, there to spend hours in secret prayer. And when the festival of All Saints arrived, her father, determined that no capuchin should again infect her mind with fanatical notions of canonical obedience, applied to the grand vicar of the Cistercians to send a preacher to Port Royal. He came, and by his sermon, which was founded upon the words, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake," added fuel to the fire which he was sent to allay. The solemn confession at the beginning of the new year, which was also a year of Jubilee, gave the strength of conviction and will requisite for decided action. The die was now cast. The abbess of Port Royal, and, if possible, her nuns, were henceforward to return to the primitive rigour of the Cistercian rule.

The difficulties attendant upon the project were very many, and its execution might have been impossible, but for the universal respect and affection which the community had learned to feel for their superior. The result of the domestic persecution which she had suffered at Andilly was an intermittent fever, which the marshy atmosphere of Port Royal, and the perplexities of her position, had rather aggravated than allayed. She anxiously waited for an opportunity to reveal her plans to the sisterhood, and for a long time seemed unable to make or find one. Only one of the old nuns whom she had found in the convent, and

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 420.

the first of the novices whom she had herself admitted, appeared to sympathise with her desires. At last the silence on this weighty matter, which had so long subsisted between the abbess and the community, was broken in an unexpected manner. The nature of her wishes was better known than she expected: and the secret cause of her continued depression of spirits more than guessed. And the prioress, whose propriety of conduct had hitherto made her a determined opponent of reform, accompanied by another sister, sought an opportunity of private speech with Angélique, and telling her that they divined the cause of her illness, professed their readiness to accommodate themselves in every respect to her wishes. What better instance of the persuasiveness of love?*

The first blow was struck at the infraction of the vow "to have all things in common," against which Abbot de Pontarlier had inveighed so stoutly in 1504. There were, however, economical difficulties in the way of the proposed change: the convent was poor; the utmost care was necessary to make its revenues perform the requisite service; and the prioress pointed out to Angélique that the nuns husbanded their little stores with greater assiduity than they would apply to the management of the common stock. "In that case," replied the abbess, "we shall be the better able to fulfil our vow of poverty." Accordingly, on March 21st, 1609, the day sacred to St. Benedict, the founder of the great order, from which the Cistercian was an offshoot, a chapter was held, and the reform duly inaugurated. Each of the nuns brought whatever private property she possessed, and laid it at the feet of the abbess. Even a poor deaf and dumb creature, who had found in the convent a quiet refuge from the hardships of her life, caught the infection, and testified by signs her willingness to fol-

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 34, 278.

low the general example. Only two of the old nuns were obdurate. One, obedient in every other respect, could not for a while resolve to give up a garden, which she tended with her own hand, at once the pride and consolation of her dull monastic life. But after a struggle of a few months, she found she could no longer withstand the silent force of the new spirit in the house, and enclosed the key of her little domain in a letter to her confessor. The other remonstrant, who manifested in various ways her opposition to the superior, was finally removed from the monastery.*

The news of the reform could not have been very acceptable to M. Arnauld. But he made use of it in a way characteristic rather of the lawyer's astuteness than the Christian's simplicity. His great fear was lest his daughter, in the ardour of her zeal, should resign the preferment obtained at such cost of intrigue and falsehood. So he prepared himself to solicit fresh bulls from Rome, which might repair the irregularity of the former instruments. He admits now that Angélique's age had been at first falsely stated, although as yet he will not confess the whole extent of the deceit, and represents her as having been from eleven to twelve years old, when in reality she was only nine. He recounts the benefactions of his family to Port Royal, and asserts that his daughter had expended upon the abbey a far larger sum than she had received from its revenues. He even makes a merit of the reform which he had so striven to hinder, and argues from the pious intentions of Angélique that the blessing of God rested upon her profession and consecration, however premature and irregular. To relate the result of this application, it is necessary somewhat to anticipate the course of our narrative. The Holy See seems at first to have suspected the existence in this affair of an ordinary case of parental cupidity, gratified

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 37. Guilbert, vol. viii. pp. 334—337.

by ecclesiastical corruption. But having satisfied itself by inquiry, that M. Arnauld's statement of what his family had done for Port Royal in matters spiritual and temporal was literally true, the desired bulls were issued on November 23rd of the same year. They provided that La Mère Angélique should be confirmed in her abbacy, on condition that within six months from that date, she once more, legally and formally, took the veil. After some attempts on her own part to evade this necessity—for she had not yet abandoned her wish to resign her burdensome honours—she yielded to the solicitations of her father, and was for the first time canonically received as a nun, May 6th, 1610.*

The establishment of a community of goods was only one of many difficulties with which Angélique had to contend. The vow of seclusion, by which monastic persons bound themselves neither to go beyond, nor, except in case of necessity, to admit any secular persons within the sacred precincts, was habitually broken. It would seem that the influence of Madame Arnauld had, during the earlier years of her daughter's abbacy, restrained the community within those limits of indulgence in this respect which decency and public opinion prescribed; for her child's sake she took care that no gay cavaliers, and, as far as possible, no priests of doubtful character, should have access to the convent. But Angélique was now bent upon conforming the practice of Port Royal to the letter of the Cistercian rule, and prepared to sacrifice to her own conception of obedience the unrestricted intercourse with her parents which she had hitherto enjoyed. She announced, therefore, to the nuns, that henceforward the special permission of the superior would be required before they could even communicate with their relations and friends in the parlour; much more, before

* Guilbert, vol. viii. p. 342.

they could themselves be permitted to leave the conventual precincts. And she added, as a proof of her sincerity, that she was resolved to enforce the same rule of exclusion against M. and Madame Arnauld as against others. Accordingly, at the reception of a nun, which took place in the autumn of this year, the numerous and fashionable company was entertained outside the convent walls.

M. Arnauld was profoundly ignorant of his daughter's intentions. She had, indeed, endeavoured to induce her mother to make known her resolution to him; but Madame Arnauld, thinking any such fanatical scheme at once absurd and impossible, had refused to tempt her husband's anger by the disclosure. It was now term time; he would visit Port Royal as usual, when the vacation commenced, and, beyond doubt, would, as usual, be admitted. In the meantime Angélique's firmness began to waver, and she consulted the Abbé de Vauclair, the young Bernardine who had formerly made so deep an impression on her mind, and who was now confessor of the convent. As might be expected, his zeal for a measure, the execution of which cost himself no heaviness of heart, no conflict of conscience, was unbounded; and he replied that to admit her parents within her gates was surely to encounter the penalties of mortal sin. Her resolution was thenceforth taken, though she must have contemplated the approach of her father's visit with many a faltering of will, and put up frequent prayers for strength in this hard path of duty. At length, the once welcome, now dreaded, messenger arrived, and announced that, on the 25th of September, the family party, consisting of M. and Madame Arnauld, their eldest son, M. d'Andilly, and their daughters, Madame Le Mâitre and Mademoiselle Anne Arnauld, would reach Port Royal. Angélique prepared for the struggle by taking into her own charge the keys of all the convent gates, feeling that in a matter in which the sympathies of the community were arrayed against her, she

could trust herself alone. When the travellers arrived, she was on her knees in the church; the sisterhood were assembled in the refectory at the noontide meal. Angélique herself replied to the summons from the closed gates, and, opening the wicket, entreated her father to enter the parlour hard by, and there hear what she had to say. M. Arnauld scarcely knew how to answer so unexpected a request. He repeats his demand for admittance, insists, commands, grows every moment more angry, and still is answered by the same firm petition to go where he can be informed of the reasons of his exclusion. Madame Arnauld first, and then hot-headed Robert d'Andilly, take up the dispute: the abbess is a monster of ingratitude; her father will die of grief to have brought up so thankless a child, and the sin will lie at her door. He calls to the nuns not to suffer so gross an insult to be offered to such benefactors of the house, and is not quite unsuccessful in his attempt to excite a sedition, for there are murmurs within, and Dame Morel, the old nun, who has not yet given up her garden, searches for the keys. But unreasonable anger was the expedient least likely to subdue the lofty resolution of the abbess. Her courage rose higher with the storm, and she still persisted in opening only the wicket. Then the aid of stratagem was invoked to do what force was unable to accomplish, and M. Arnauld demanded that at least his two other daughters should be given up to him, trusting to make good his own entrance by the door which would be opened to let them out. But Angélique's quick wit comprehended the trick: a nun, in whom she had confidence, sent the two girls out by a side door, and they stood among their friends almost before the demand for their restitution was completed. And the little Agnès, a child of a peculiarly cool and grave temperament, added fuel to the wrath of her quick-tempered brother, by quietly de-

fending her sister's conduct, in a quotation from the canons of the Council of Trent.

The besiegers now acknowledged themselves completely vanquished, and prepared to draw off their forces. But M. Arnauld, before finally departing, consented to enter the parlour for a moment to take a last view of the daughter, who seemed, to the bitterness of his heart, thus to cast him off. As he approached the lattice, the sight of his evident grief excited a correspondent emotion in Angélique's hitherto unmoved heart. But when he proceeded in a few touching words to remind her what that fatherly aid had been which she thus rejected, and to implore her, as his last request upon earth, not to ruin her health by indiscreet austerities, her firmness altogether gave way, and she fell insensible behind the grating. Love had conquered the proud heart which anger had failed to vanquish. And now the confusion became worse confounded. M. Arnauld shouted for help; his wife and daughters ran to the convent gate and knocked furiously; while the nuns, in obedience to Angélique's previous commands, retired the further from the scene of disturbance. At last the cries of M. d'Andilly availed to inform them that their abbess needed their aid; and she was carried to her chamber, having just strength to falter out a request that her parents would not leave the convent till they had seen her once more. After a while her bed was brought down into the parlour, and she soon saw, in the joy that greeted her recovery, that all was forgotten and forgiven. Her accomplices and advisers were not quite so safe, however, from her father's wrath. The Abbé de Vauclair, who had carefully kept out of the way while the battle was raging, now thought proper to appear and claim part of the credit of victory; but M. Arnauld, glad perhaps to find some one on whom he might safely vent his yet unexhausted anger, attacked him fiercely,

and finally, not altogether, we are told, to the regret of Angélique, procured his removal from Port Royal.*

So ended the memorable day, known evermore in the annals of Port Royal as "la journée du guichet." M. Arnauld remained till the next day, listened quietly to his daughter's arguments, and, perhaps because he could not help it, declared himself convinced by them. The matter practically terminated in a compromise. Permission was accorded to him by M. de Citeaux† to enter the precincts of the convent, that he might superintend the buildings and gardens; but further than this he was never suffered to penetrate. Madame Arnauld and her daughters also obtained the same privilege, though the former allowed some time to elapse before she availed herself of it; for in the heat of dispute she had vowed never again to set foot in Port Royal, and for twelve months religiously kept her oath. Then it happened that she heard a sermon on unlawful vows, which satisfied her conscience, and that very day hurried to embrace the daughter, from whom her own hasty anger had so long separated her.

The complete reform of a monastery like Port Royal was not however the work of a single day, or accomplished by one effort. The sisterhood were not altogether willing to give up indulgences which they had been taught to consider innocent; and the monks of Citeaux, the metropolis of the order, violently opposed a change of manners which silently convicted them of unfaithfulness to their rule. That little by little the discipline of the house was brought back to the severity which characterised the palmy

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp 38—41, *et seq.* 279. Guilbert, vol. viii. p. 344.

† It may be needful to mention that bishops, abbots, and abbesses in France are usually known by the names of their sees or abbeys. Thus the illustrious Bossuet is designated in memoirs of his time, first as M. de Condom, and on his final translation as M. de Meaux. Thus also the title by which Angélique Arnauld would be known in the Parisian society of her time is Madame de Port Royal.

days of Clairvaux, and throughout all the vicissitudes of the sisterhood was maintained intact till the final dispersion in 1709, must be attributed to the remarkable ascendency which the abbess gained and preserved over the minds of her associates. In all labours she was the foremost to take her share: no austerities were enjoined which she did not herself practise. Her room, her bed, her strength, her sympathy, were all freely bestowed on the ailing or the erring. The discontented and the worldly-minded were shamed out of their faults by the example of her cheerful piety. One anecdote out of many that are extant will suffice to show how she converted into devoted adherents the chance companions of her conventual life. Sister Anne Gertrude Garnier, the first novice received by her, suffered greatly during her noviciate from some wound or sore in her leg. Fearing lest the hurt should prove a disqualification for taking the vows, she carefully concealed it from all her companions, till at last the fetid exudations rendered further secrecy impossible. In her extremity she told her tale, with tears in her eyes, to the abbess, who at once, with admirable discernment, acquiesced in her wish to hide her misfortune; washed and dressed the sore with her own hands; and when it was healed and the year of trial at an end, formally received the novice into the sisterhood. Is it to be wondered at that when the struggle for reform began sister Garnier stood almost alone with her abbess against the hostile community? *

It was the labour of eight years to introduce into Port Royal all the changes on which La Mère Angélique had set her heart. One of the first objects to which she directed her attention was the better observance of the vow of poverty. This was not indeed a very difficult matter, for

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 56; vol. ii p. 430. Guilbert, vol. viii. p. 360.

the whole revenues of the abbey amounted only to 6000 livres. To make up deficiencies M. Arnauld had been in the habit of regularly sending sums of money to his daughter. These were now steadfastly refused, and though the abbess was obliged to sell her plate; though the accommodation for the nuns was scanty and unhealthy, and their clothes and furniture of the meanest, their trust in God and content with what He was pleased to give them never failed. Serge was substituted for linen in the habits of the sisterhood, and cups of fine porcelain, which Madame Arnauld had provided for the refectory, were exchanged for the commonest stone ware. At the same time a plain, but ungrudging hospitality was constantly exercised; the wandering friar was entertained with better fare than his hosts reserved for themselves, and the poor of the surrounding villages were plentifully fed. The custom of receiving novices without any regard to the dowry which they might bring was commenced, and disinterestedness was established as the rule, as it was afterwards the glory, of Port Royal. It was a hard matter to open the gates of most French convents to a portionless bride of Christ: here the penniless were received in faith, and the rich often sent back as without vocation. La Mère Suireau des Anges entered the convent, of which she was afterwards one of the most distinguished ornaments, in 1615. Her father was an advocate of Chartres, whose wealth bore no proportion to his integrity and ability; and his youngest daughter, feeling the strongest inclination towards the monastic life, persuaded him to allow her to accompany to Port Royal three well-endowed damsels who were seeking admittance there. One glance from the keen discernment of Angélique singled her out from her companions, and she alone, though without a dowry, was received into the convent.*

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 300.

There were, however, other vows to be fulfilled than those of poverty and seclusion. The Benedictine rule included the obligation to silence, which now began to be enforced. The fasts of the church were observed with canonical strictness; matins were sung at 2 A. M. instead of the more indulgent hour of four. The professed, as well as the lay sisters, took their turn in the labours of the kitchen and the infirmary. We hear that even a walk in the convent garden came to be looked upon as an unnecessary luxury — a sanitary mistake which was not slow to produce its necessary fruits. Yet what wonder that errors were committed in the first flush of a zeal such as this? The abbess was foremost in austerity, though with characteristic aversion to display, she did her utmost to conceal her self-maceration. Perhaps the external fervour, as well as the secret penance, were both manifestations of the struggle between the enforced circumstances of her life and the natural desires of healthful youth. We are told that a nun who slept in her bed once missed her from her side, and drawing the curtain, saw her dropping burning wax upon her naked arm. "What would you have?" she said, many years afterwards, on being reminded of this; "everything was right in those days."* And so, after awhile, in 1614, she announced the necessity of giving up the use of animal food in obedience to the rule, though not till she had tried the experiment herself. For, during the month before she made the announcement, she had, unknown to the community, confined herself to a spare vegetable diet, and now only asked of the rest that they should follow her example.

It says but little for the monastic clergy of France, that one of the chief difficulties experienced by Angélique, during this period of transition, was that of finding a

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 40.

spiritual adviser adequate to the wants of the community. The confessor, whom she found in the house, hastened to quit it when the vision of reform woke him from his spiritual lethargy. The preachers whose exhortations had initiated the change were many of them too young to become the permanent advisers of an abbess of eighteen, and the counsels of the old were for the most part too timid for her earnest spirit. Confessor after confessor was despatched to the convent by its ecclesiastical superiors, and resolutely dismissed by Angélique, on proof of incompetency and immorality. She was at last fortunate enough to find a friend in Père Archange, a Capuchin monk, and singularly enough an Englishman, of the noble house of Pembroke, whose advice assisted her through the most difficult portion of her conventual career. His estimate of the order to which he belonged may be inferred from the fact that he expressly warned the young abbess never to permit a Capuchin to enter her convent as confessor, on the ground that, one and all, they were unfit to undertake so delicate an office. Another friend of Port Royal in its early days was Père Suffren, a famous Jesuit preacher in Paris, who often took refuge from his popularity in the solitudes of Port Royal, and ignorant of coming ills, aided in the foundation of a community destined to excite the deadliest hatred of his society. Other names, now long forgotten, might easily be cited as those of wise and friendly churchmen, who watched the struggle for reform with eager interest, and supported it by the gravity of their approval. But it remains, nevertheless, an indisputable fact, that the glory of the reformed Port Royal belongs exclusively to its young abbess; that her keen conscience originated the project, which her ardent zeal, her extraordinary clearness of judgment, and her singular power of conciliating affection, brought to a triumphant conclusion.*

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 280.

V.

THE news of the wonderful reform which the mingled zeal and discretion of a girl of eighteen had effected in Port Royal was soon spread abroad by the universal voice of rumour. The proximity of the abbey to Paris, the connexion of the Arnauld family both with the parliament and the court, and above all, the rare spectacle of a community living in strict obedience to old monastic rule, soon attracted the attention both of friends and enemies. And the eye of the Church, always so keen in its discernment of practical means and ends, was quickly fixed upon Angélique as a fit instrument of ecclesiastical reform. Why should she not accomplish elsewhere the same good work as at Port Royal? Scandals in need of reform were not wanting; and those, too, of so gross a kind, that even the easy consciences of the monks of Citeaux were stirred to indignation. And the task enjoined upon La Mère Angélique by her superior was the reform of the Royal House of Maubuisson.

The abbess of Maubuisson was the sister of La Belle Gabrielle, Madame d'Estrées, the story of whose irregular appointment we have already told. And now Gabrielle and her royal lover were both dead, and Madame d'Estrées found the somewhat stern, morose Louis XIII. indisposed to tolerate her shameless profligacy. Perhaps her conspicuous position in the neighbourhood of the capital reminded him unpleasantly of those failings in his father's character to which his own bore least resemblance. It is impossible to conceive of an instance of monastic corruption which should

more loudly call for sharp and effectual remedies. The revenues of the monastery amounted to 30,000 livres, which were expended in the support of eighteen nuns. The abbess was surrounded by her own illegitimate daughters, one of whom, the offspring of a person of quality, she was educating to be her coadjutrix and successor. The sisters, almost all without vocation for the monastic life, were unacquainted with even the elementary doctrines of Christianity. The Bernardine monk, who performed the functions of confessor, often reproached them with the stolid ignorance which reduced their confessions to a series of inquiries on his part, and a plain answer of yes or no on theirs. So they hit upon the notable expedient of composing, with much labour and consultation, three forms of confession,—one for the great festivals, one for Sundays, and one for ordinary days,—which were written in a book, and passed from hand to hand as occasion required. The service of the church was chanted with such horrible disregard of time and tune, as to torture the ears of all bystanders who were accustomed to a decent celebration of divine worship. With this their religious duties were over for the day; and the sisters passed the rest of their time in entertaining the company who flocked from all quarters to so gay an establishment, with private theatricals, with al fresco collations in the convent gardens, or other amusements of fashionable life. But nothing can be a more striking instance of the utter disregard of monastic rules which prevailed at Maubuisson, than a practice which, we are gravely informed, had grown into a custom. On fine summer evenings, vespers and compline were said together, and as fast as possible; and their religious duties thus perfunctorily performed, abbess and nuns proceeded to promenade on the banks of certain reservoirs, which lay on the high road to Paris. And there the monks of the neighbouring abbey of St.

Martin at Pontoise were wont to meet and dance with them.*

In 1617, these irregularities, already well known to all the rest of the world, came to the ears of the King, who at once ordered M. de Citeaux to take the necessary means for their suppression. The abbot, recollecting that Madame d'Estrées was supported by rich and powerful kinsmen, was at first minded to proceed gently, and sent as commissary a monk, named De Ruptis, to collect evidence upon the spot. The messenger arrived, and unfolding his errand, asked audience of the abbess. The request was, under some pretext, refused for the time, and M. de Ruptis and his companions were conducted to a tower of the convent to pass the night. In the morning they discovered into how simple a snare they had fallen; and until, after four days' durance, they contrived or were permitted to escape, received no more liberal hospitality from Madame d'Estrées than bread and water, varied by an occasional beating, administered to the chief of the party. This outrageous proceeding seems to have convinced M. de Citeaux that he had to do with a lady on whom diplomacy would be wasted. He hastened to Paris with his grievances, and there found that the powerful relatives of his fair enemy, the Cardinal de Sourdis and the Maréchal d'Estrées, also had their cause of quarrel with her, and were indisposed to shield her from the consequences of her misdemeanours. For, unknown to them, she had married a young sister, who had been placed under her care, to the Comte de Sanzé, one of her own disreputable friends, and had impudently celebrated the marriage in the convent church itself. So the abbot went down to Maubuisson, armed with all necessary authority, public and private, to bring Madame d'Estrées to submission.

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 128; vol. ii. p. 268.

The task was, however, more difficult than he supposed. The abbess had the hardihood to refuse to recognise him in his character of Visitor of the Convent, and would neither see nor hold any communication with him. He proceeded, however, in the usual course: examined the sisters separately, and held a final chapter, to which the abbess was three times summoned, and which she as often refused to attend. The visitor satisfied himself for the present with drawing up his report, and quitted the field of battle only to return to it with overwhelming reinforcements. For he obtained in Paris the requisite authority to convey the abbess to the convent of the Filles Penitentes, and returned to Maubuisson with the necessary force of gens-d'armes to carry the sentence into execution. Two days' parley was again granted, but the abbess remained obdurate; and on the third, the archers, to whom the nuns denied admittance at the convent gate, entered by the windows. But when they had penetrated to the apartment of the abbess, they found it empty; and it was only after many hours' active search that she was discovered, almost naked and half-dead with cold. And as she still obstinately refused to go, the gens-d'armes quietly replaced her in her bed, lifted the mattress into a carriage, and conveyed her, accompanied by one of her nuns, to her destination.

M. de Citeaux, who for awhile seems to have abandoned the scene to the secular arm, now re-appeared, and calling the nuns together, informed them that he was about to appoint a superior, who, in the absence of the abbess, should exercise her authority and restore the conventual discipline of the house. With a pretence of accommodation to their wishes, he proposed to them three abbesses, from whom they might choose one to be their future mistress, and gave them till the next day to decide. The three were Madame du Thresor, Madame de Pont-aux-Dames,

and Madame de Port Royal. Nearly all the night was spent in anxious consultation. Angélique was well known to many of the nuns, for she had been educated at Maubuisson; but the rumour of her stern reforms counterbalanced in their minds the recollection of her childish amiability. And at last they resolved to ask M. de Citeaux to appoint a professed nun of their own convent, leaving the choice to his own judgment. He promised compliance with their request; proceeded to Paris, where he gained the consent of M. Arnauld to the step which he was about to take, and then wrote to the astonished and dismayed nuns, that he had appointed as the substitute for Madame d'Estrées, Madame de Port Royal, who was, as they knew and wished, a professed sister of their house.*

Angélique willingly responded to the summons which was at the same time addressed to herself, as she hoped by this means to loosen the connection with Port Royal, which still weighed upon her conscience. She appointed her sister Agnès superior during her absence, and set out for Maubuisson, on the 19th of February, 1618, accompanied by four nuns, one of them her own sister, Marie Claire Arnauld. As might have been expected, the reception which the new comers met with was but cold. The nuns of Maubuisson felt that their ghostly father had played something like a trick at their expense. And they were also incited to rebellion by a letter from the abbot's secretary, who informed them that they owed to the interference of Madame de Port Royal the severe regulations which his superior had drawn up for their future guidance. But obstinacy and distrust, even so supported, could not withstand the magic of Angélique's powers of conciliation. They found in her, not the morose, austere devotee whom they feared, but the frank, affectionate girl who had long ago won their hearts.

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 110.

She addressed them by the familiar names which her childish fancy had affixed to them. She had forgotten none, and remembered all in kindness. To one aged sister, her old teacher, who had been blind for many years, she entirely devoted herself, and waited upon her as assiduously as in the days of her noviciate. At the same time her austerities were more severe than at any previous period; as if she wished to prove that the most rigid self-denial was compatible with cheerfulness, and even gaiety. For, before leaving Port Royal, she had laid down for the guidance of her companions a rule which both she and they observed to the letter. She told them that while there were bounds of discretion which, under ordinary circumstances, they ought to observe in their labours and austerities, the reform of Maubuisson was an undertaking in which God manifestly demanded of them more than this; and that they ought to ask of themselves, not what they could do or bear, but simply what the interests of Christian love demanded of them. And it is recorded that sister Isabelle Agnès de Chateauneuf, who, at the early age of twenty, was entrusted by her abbess with the care of the novices of Maubuisson, did not survive the severity of her self-imposed labours; while toil and penance, and the hourly struggle with discouragement, set a visible mark upon the more robust frames of her companions.

Angélique began her task by separating the temporal from the spiritual; and procured from M. de Citeaux the appointment of an agent, to whom she committed the charge of the conventual revenues and the task of repelling the numerous legal attacks made by Madame d' Estrées. Regularity and decency were restored to the services in the church; though, to the last, it was a hard task for Angélique and her novices to overbear the loud and discordant voices of the elder nuns. Seclusion and silence were rigidly enforced, and a truly Cistercian severity of life took the place

of the old luxury. As usual, the abbess asked of her nuns no sacrifices, no labours which she was not herself willing to endure. The splendid apartments of the late superior were converted into an infirmary; and, except when she shared the bed of some sick nun, Angélique betook herself to a cell, lighted only by the door; from its position immediately beneath the tiles, insufferably hot in summer and bitterly cold in winter; damp from a gutter which ran along the wall, and so close to the staircase that its inmate had little chance of quiet repose. Into a corner of this luxurious apartment her straw mattress was negligently thrown upon the floor, and scantily covered with a robe such as the nuns usually wore during the day. She rose from it only to share in the meanest labours of the house. She swept the church and the dormitory, carried wood to the kitchen, washed the dishes, even dug in the garden,—encouraging the sisters to these unusual toils by cheerful speech and example. And as, little by little, she shamed the elder nuns into silent submission by her own self-devotion, she felt also that no effectual change could be wrought in their minds without a large admixture of a new and purer element. She had the abbot's permission to introduce novices into the convent, the revenues of which were calculated to support one hundred inmates. About seventy maidens, of various conditions, presented themselves for admission, of whom thirty-two were accepted. It is characteristic of the disinterestedness which was Angélique's rule in this matter, that only three of these brought any dowry with them; of her power of winning love, that when she left Maubuisson, all preferred to encounter the poverty of Port Royal rather than be separated from her.

The progress of reform experienced few interruptions till the morning of September 10th, 1619, when Madame d'Estrées, who had escaped from Paris, suddenly presented herself before the gates of the abbey, and demanded admittance.

The porter refused to open, but M. de Sanzé, and some other gentlemen by whom Madame d'Estrées was accompanied, forced the doors, and not only threatened to throw him into the fishpond hard by, but actually wounded him in the arm. From the outer gate the intruder made her way into the church by help of a false key, with which a confederate among the nuns, Sœur de la Serre, had supplied her. She left for the time her male companions outside, and advanced along the aisle to meet La Mère Angélique, who had just left the confessional.

"Madame," said Madame d'Estrées, with the ironical politeness which the French language so happily expresses, "I have come hither to thank you for the care which you have taken of my abbey during my absence, and to beg you to return to your own, and leave me the management of mine."

"Madame," replied Angélique, with equal politeness, "I would do so most willingly if it lay in my power; but you know that M. de Citeaux, our Superior, has ordered me to undertake the government of this house: and that as I came to it in obedience to him, I can leave it only when he commands."

For some short time the same ceremonious civility marked the intercourse of these rival potentates. Madame d'Estrées was conducted to her old apartments, at the new appropriation of which she expressed great disgust: and a dinner was prepared for her—very different from the ordinary meagre fare of the house. Still, at the morning high mass, Angélique, to the ex-abbess's violent wrath, assumed as a matter of course, the superior's place and functions. The next few hours were spent by Madame d'Estrées in endeavouring to insinuate herself into the good graces of her old nuns, and a vain attempt to get the keys of the convent into her possession: by Angélique, in sealing up papers, and preparing the minds of the younger sisters for

the scenes of violence and confusion, which she foresaw must soon ensue. The community was divided in opinion: the elder nuns being willing to yield canonical obedience to their old abbess; the sisters whom Angélique had received adhering to her cause. Even Dom Sabbatier, the confessor placed in the convent by M. de Citeaux, turned traitor, and reporting to Angélique all the threats of M. de Sanzé and his friends, entreated her to give way to this display of force. She answered that her duty to her superiors, who had placed her where she was, forbade her to leave the monastery except upon actual compulsion.

In the afternoon Madame d'Estrées' patience gave way. She invited Angélique to accompany her to the church, hoping by fraud or force to get her outside the door. "Let us go, madame," replied the latter, "we cannot be in a better place." Once there, Madame d'Estrées insolently ordered Angélique to quit the monastery at once, and on her firm refusal to do so, caught her by her robe, and endeavoured to drag her towards the porch. The novices clung to their beloved mother; and in the struggle her veil was left in Madame d'Estrées' hand. Stung by this premeditated insult, as it appeared, one of them, whom nature had endowed with a high spirit and a robust body, forcibly seized the intrusive abbess, threw her upon the ground, and angrily tore off her head-dress. Madame d'Estrées had gained her point: it was her interest to promote a struggle, that she might have a plausible pretext for calling in the aid which had been waiting since morning. "Help, brother, help," she cried, "they are killing me,"—and M. de Sanzé and his companions rushed in with drawn swords, and even firing pistols to intimidate the helpless occupants of the church. Angélique was seized and dragged to the outer court, where a carriage was waiting: while Sœur de la Serre endeavoured to prevent any of the nuns from leaving the church. But they would not be separated from their

mother: some entered the carriage with her; others climbed to the box; and others again clung to the wheels; thus, at the risk of their lives, compelling the coachman to rein in his horses. But Angélique now perceived that while she had done enough to vindicate her position in the monastery, all further resistance would be in vain. She descended therefore, from the carriage, and suffered Madame d'Estrées to escort her to the outer gate of the precincts from which it was intended that she should depart alone. But thirty-four of the sisters, including nearly all of those whom she had herself received into the convent, crowded round her at the postern, and emboldened by numbers, forcibly compelled Madame d'Estrées and the porter to suffer them to pass. Nor did the singularity of the occasion cost La Mère Angélique one moment's indecision. She formed her nuns into a procession: from the black robe of one of them tore veils for all: and so, two and two, telling their beads in solemn silence, they took their way to the neighbouring town of Pontoise. Here they entered the first church to which they came, which happened to be that of the Jesuits. But as soon as the meaning of the mysterious procession was known, the town and the various ecclesiastical bodies of Pontoise, vied in offering hospitality to the expelled sisterhood. Many reasons, however, induced Angélique to accept the invitation of the Grand Vicar of the diocese, who vacated his house for her reception. The whole party could boast the possession of only eight francs: but the piety of Pontoise soon supplied plate, beds, provisions: a chapel was hastily fitted up for the celebration of mass; and in a few hours the nuns were observing all the rules of conventual life as strictly as in the cloister.

But the triumph of Madame d'Estrées was not to be of long duration. The porter, who had been wounded in the beginning of the fray, had immediately hastened to Paris,

to inform the Arnauld family of her escape and reappearance at Maubuisson. M. Arnauld was enjoying his vacation at Audilly; but his second son, Henri, afterwards Bishop of Angers, made immediate application to the Chambre des Vacations, and procured a decree for the removal of Madame d'Estrées and the re-establishment of his sister. The execution of this decree was intrusted to the Prevôt de l'Isle*, M. de Fontis, who with a body of 250 archers, proceeded to Maubuisson. So promptly was all this effected, that on the evening of September 11th, the day after Angélique's expulsion, M. de Fontis arrived at the monastery, whence Madame de Estrées, duly warned by her scouts of his approach, had already fled. He left 100 archers to guard against the possibility of her return, and proceeded to Pontoise to fulfil the other portion of his commission. Although it was ten o'clock at night when he arrived, Angélique resolved to lose no time in returning to Maubuisson. The town was alight with torches. All the ecclesiastics of the place lent solemnity to her restoration by their presence. A great concourse of people followed the procession to the gates of the monastery. And thus, between a double file of mounted gens-d'armes, each with a lighted flambeau in one hand, a loaded musket in the other, Angélique and her nuns walked two and two to the home from which they had been so violently and insolently expelled.

But Madame d'Estrées was still at large; and if the burgesses of Pontoise sympathised with Angélique, the nobility of the province actively supported her aristocratic competitor. For some months it was found necessary to keep a guard at Maubuisson. Night and day shots were fired at

* Under the old régime the Prevôt de l'Isle was the head of the police, who watched over the safety of Paris and its environs. The gens-d'armes under his command were called archers, though it is needless to add that they were armed with sword and musket.

the windows, and every effort made to terrify Angélique into abandoning her charge. And it was not until Madame d'Estrées was discovered and once more conveyed to the Filles Penitentes, that these cowardly attacks ceased. The remainder of this unhappy woman's life exhibited little change. She often escaped, and was as often recaptured. She spent the pension of 1200 livres, allowed her from the abbey, in vain attempts to regain her dignity, and died a miserable death at last in a hovel, in one of the suburbs of Paris.*

Angélique remained at Maubuisson till the spring of 1623, patiently labouring in the work of reform, but exposed to many discouragements, both from the persevering attempts of Madame d'Estrées, and the passive resistance of the elder nuns, who looked back with regret to the time of the old licence. In 1622, on the final deposition of the ex-abbess, the king wished to confer the preferment upon her; but she was too sincere in the desire to lay down her office at Port Royal, to accept the far more splendid and burdensome dignity of Maubuisson. And she therefore willingly acquiesced in the appointment of Madame de Soissons, an illegitimate daughter of the royal house of Condé, who was at this time a nun of Fontevrault, much esteemed for piety. For thirteen months, while the necessary bulls were being procured at Rome, Madame de Soissons was an inmate of Maubuisson, still under the government of Angélique, who sought by this means to imbue her successor with the spirit of reform. The attempt was vain. The abbess elect was displeased with the number of portionless nuns — beggars, she contemptuously called them,—whom Angélique had received into the house; and those who were anxious for the re-establishment of an easier rule, did not fail to

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 132, 160, 182; vol. ii. p. 282. Guilbert, vol. ix. p. 72, 105, 124.

foment the estrangement which hence arose. It was to no purpose that when Madame de Soissons was attacked with small pox, Angélique tenderly nursed her, and nearly suffered from her charity in the loss of her own life. They parted coolly, if not angrily. But Angélique did not leave Maubuisson without carrying with her very manifest proofs of the good work which she had accomplished there. The thirty-two nuns, whose vows she had received, all demanded permission to accompany her to Port Royal. "If you, madame," she said to the abbess, "think your house, with a revenue of 30,000 livres, overburdened with the charge of thirty nuns, I shall not think mine, which possesses but 6000, incommoded by their reception." So she wrote to Port Royal, and received a reply, signed by all the sisterhood, offering to the new comers a hearty welcome in God's name, and a share of their poverty. And in the beginning of March, 1623, they quitted Maubuisson, not for ever, but one day to return to it under brighter auspices. Angélique herself was detained for some days in Paris, and sent her companions forward to Port Royal, enjoining them, at the moment when from the edge of the valley, they perceived the belfry of their new abode, to repeat together the words (Ps. cxli. 3) "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: and keep the door of my lips;" and thenceforward to observe a strict silence till she arrived to release them from their promise. They were met at some distance from the monastery by the charitable sisters of Port Royal, who, in the words of their own chronicle, "sang Te Deum, and opened their arms to receive and embrace the gift which God had vouchsafed to them, in order that He might thus enrich their house more and more with the inexhaustible treasure of poverty." And when La Mère Angélique arrived to take her place at the head of her own sisterhood, the joy and fervour of spirit are compared to the roaring

flame which mounts upward when store of faggots are thrown upon an already blazing fire. Eight new novices, in addition to the thirty from Maubuisson, were speedily received, and though the conventual buildings were small and inconvenient, and the revenues scanty, economy and charity performed their wonted miracles, and there was room and frugal food for all.*

The history of Port Royal during Angélique's absence at Maubuisson, presents few incidents for our narrative. The reform had been confirmed and maintained under Agnès Arnauld, who had long before given up her own abbey of St. Cyr, and in 1620 had been formally appointed coadjutor to her sister. Two other sisters, Anne Eugenie and Marie, were now professed nuns of Port Royal. Antoine Arnauld, the father, closed his active life in 1619, at the age of 59; and the year 1624 was destined to witness the entry of his widow and a fifth daughter, into the sisterhood, with which the sympathies and the fortunes of his family became every day more closely connected. These were the happiest days of Port Royal. The beloved abbess was united with those who best esteemed and understood her; the ardour of the "first love" still burned brightly: no voice of detraction was raised outside the humble walls which contained so great a wealth of piety and joy, and the zeal for reform had as yet escaped the inevitable reproach of heresy. But those days were as few as they were happy.†

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 198, 317; vol. ii. p. 270. Guilbert, vol. ix. p. 161.

† Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp 189, 194; vol. iii. p. 291.

VI.

THERE is one incident of Angélique's life at Maubuisson which I purposely omitted to notice in its proper place, that by pausing before it for a while, we might gain a brief outlook into the life of the Catholic Church, as well beyond as within the limits of half-Huguenot France. For it was in the midst of the difficulties which I have just narrated, that Angélique first found a spiritual guide to whom she could implicitly trust her conscience, and formed the friendship which connects the names of St. Francis de Sales and La Mère de Chantal with the early days of Port Royal. And though it might be difficult to trace to her brief intercourse with this celebrated champion of Roman Catholicism any of the tendencies which were afterwards the glory and the misfortune of her community, it will repay us if we interrupt our narrative to learn what we can of one who rendered such good service to his Church in the hour of her peril.

The bull issued in 1665, by Pope Alexander VII., for the canonisation of Francis de Sales, recites, besides seven authentic miracles, the fact that he had converted no fewer than 72,000 heretics. What claim to a place in the Calendar could be more powerful than this, at the beginning of the seventeenth century? England and Scotland were wholly Protestant, as were Holland and the North; in Germany heresy was firmly encamped among the Saxon principalities, and had pushed strong outposts into Bohemia and Hungary, and Austria itself; in France the Huguenot king did not yet dare to forget whose swords had raised

him to the throne, and the Calvinists were a state within a state. The whole of the Spanish Peninsula was, indeed, still faithful, and prompt and vigorous persecution had extirpated all visible heresy from the Italian soil; though as a counterpoise to the latter might be reckoned the too near Switzerland, and Geneva, the capital of the most obnoxious form of Protestantism. Perhaps it might be said that at the precise epoch of which I speak, the tide was already upon the turn. On the one hand, the Protestants were weakened by internal dissensions: the Lutherans persecuted the Calvinists; the Calvinists distrusted the followers of Zwingli; and all were ready to invoke the secular arm against those who, like Servetus, followed the path of free inquiry into perilous regions of heresy. Then, as now, there was no political union between Protestant Churches; if Elizabeth of England exercised for a season some of the powers of a Protestant protectorate, it was only a temporary sense of danger which induced the various states to rally round her, and the sceptre altogether passed from the feeble hands of her successor. The large class of men, who are rarely capable of profound religious conviction or emotion, and who cling, therefore, to established forms of faith, were confirmed in their allegiance to Catholicism by the signs of its re-awakening vigour. On the other hand, the Church of Rome addressed herself to the task of recovering her lost territory, with a strength and unity of purpose which were impossible to her opponents. The abuses which had called forth Luther's indignant invective were reformed; the old monastic foundations were brought back to the pristine severity of their rule; and popes, whose chief love was for ancient classics and modern art, were succeeded by men of grave character and austere life. The Inquisition was awakened from its long sleep, and centralised in the Vatican. New religious orders were founded: the Theatines, the Barnabites, and, greatest and

most effectual of all, the Society of Jesus. The Congregation of the Oratory, originally established in Rome by St. Philip Neri, was transplanted into France by Cardinal de Berulle, and became the school in which the celebrated preachers of that country learned their art. The order of the Visitation, founded by Francis de Sales and Madame de Chantal, spread through the whole of France and Savoy. Vincent de Paul, the son of a French peasant, and always the friend of the class from which he sprang, originated both the Congregation of the Mission and the order of Sisters of Mercy. In learning and in controversial acumen, the Catholic disputants were not inferior to their opponents; in the art of uniting all human motives in support of the interests of their Church, they far surpassed them. Beyond doubt, they were unscrupulous, as well as able, in the application of means to the desired end, and recognised little distinction between lawful and unlawful arts of controversy. The temporal power was induced to discourage, where it did not absolutely persecute Protestantism. The most consummate preaching, and the most subtle intrigue; the strictest austerity of life, and the loosest political morality, were combined to effect one purpose. The Jesuits conquered the schools by an improved system of education, and, at the same time, secured a monopoly of the direction of royal consciences. Society was assaulted at opposite sides by these resolute soldiers of the Church, who entrenched themselves at once in the schoolroom and the palace.

It would, however, betray great ignorance of the causes by which religious revolutions are effected, to suppose that this reaction can be wholly accounted for by the subtle tactics and administrative unity of the Church of Rome. Spiritual effects are produced only by spiritual means, and there can be no doubt that the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries mark the epoch of a great awakening of religious life in Catholic Europe.

Nor must it be forgotten, that if the Protestant truth of Justification by Faith represent most accurately the apostolic method of dealing with men's souls, it is also peculiarly exposed to popular misconstruction. The test of the tree known by its fruit, is that which the majority of men apply to religious professions; and a single instance of practical Antinomianism, of alleged faith without visible works, does more wrong to Christianity than a hundred appeals to Scripture can repair. And it is to this popular test that both the theory and the practice of Catholicism perpetually appeal. A believer's sincerity is made manifest by the earnestness and punctuality of his devotions, by his submission to the moral law, by his mastery over the flesh and the world. And so long as self-indulgence is the world's sin, self-maceration will enter largely into the world's ideal of the saint. When the knightly Loyola abandoned the camp to devote himself to the chivalrous service of his heavenly Mistress; when Francis Xavier preached his gospel to the pearl-divers on the scorching sands of Malabar, and laid down his life a sacrifice on some savage Indian island; when Borgia, Duke of Gandia, grandee of Spain, kinsman, friend, and counsellor of Charles V., gave up all to don the Jesuit's habit, and to take his place, a nameless soldier in this new army of the Church,—men believed, not unnaturally, that the Christian zeal of the first Jesuits was as pure as it was powerful. And the history of each of the orders which I have enumerated begins with instances of a like devotion. The Church of Rome is constantly successful in producing men who are at once deeply impressed by the practical precepts of Christianity, and convinced of the identity of Christianity with the Church. They burn with an equal devotion to the wants of suffering men, and to the interests of their own communion. Within the fold they are revered as saints: outside of it they are hated as persecutors. No sacrifice for the

faithful too great; no warfare against the faithless too arduous, is their watchword. Such, we shall find, was Francis de Sales; such—if they had not themselves been forced into a posture of defence—might have been the friends of Port Royal.*

Francis de Sales† was born at the Château de Sales, in Savoy, on the 21st August, 1567, three years after the death of Calvin. His family was among the noblest and most ancient of the land; and his father and mother as conspicuous by their virtues as by their rank.‡ He was the eldest of a large family; and, like more religious reformers than one, the child of many prayers. Before his birth, the sight of the winding-sheet of our Lord, preserved in the cathedral of Chambery, had engaged his mother, Madame de Boisy, to make a vow that her first-born should be sacred to God's service; and the impression thus made upon her mind can only have been deepened by the fact, that though the child was prematurely born, he grew up healthy and beautiful. His early education was so successfully conducted in the neighbourhood of his home, that M. de Boisy sent him to continue it in Paris, at the College of Navarre,

* Conf. Ranke's History of the Popes, books ii. v.

† Not having been able to procure any of the earlier lives of Francis de Sales, I have been obliged to rely to some extent on the facts contained in Marsollier's Lives of Francis and Madame de Chantal, and in the elaborate biography of the Saint, by the Curé of St. Sulpice, recently published (3rd ed. 1858); though the spirit in which these books are written necessitates the use of a discriminating criticism. The long article, "Franz von Sales," in Ersch and Grueber's learned Encyclopædia, is disappointing, being little else than an abstract of Marsollier, with a bare enumeration of earlier sources of knowledge.

‡ It was not until the latter years of Francis's life that his family took any territorial designation from the estate of Sales, which was made a barony in 1613, a countship in 1632, and a marquisate in 1664. The father of the Saint was originally known as the Seigneur de Nouvelles, and afterwards, from his marriage with the heiress of the House of Boisy, as the Seigneur de Boisy. Conf. Vie de F. de Sales, 1858, p. 2.

much to the regret of his wife, who feared for the singular sweetness and purity of character of which her son already gave token. Before his departure, Francis, say his biographers, asked his father's permission to receive the tonsure, the lowest of the orders which the Catholic Church confers upon her clergy, and one which does not irrevocably bind the recipient to an ecclesiastical life. A more probable account would be that his mother took this opportunity of partly fulfilling a vow, which she had by this time discovered to be distasteful to her husband. However this may be, Francis underwent the ceremony in September 1578, when he was just eleven years old.

The vow may also account for the fact that his destination was changed from the College of Navarre to that of the Jesuits, then newly established, and in the first flush of its reputation. Here, it is not likely that his astute teachers should have lost sight of that possible devotion to the Church which was so accordant with the boy's character, and was known not to be displeasing to at least one of his parents. Accordingly, while in deference to his father's wishes, Francis diligently applied himself to the studies and exercises which formed part of a young nobleman's education, he also directed his attention to theology and the languages of the Bible. His habits, even at that age, were simple and ascetic. He made a vow of perpetual chastity. He resolved to communicate once a week. He placed himself under the special protection of the Virgin, which, as he thought, he had experienced at a time of great necessity. For, as might almost have been expected, the fervour of his first devotion passed away, and left him restless, gloomy, incapable of feeling the presence of God, convinced of the need of prayer, yet utterly unable to pray. The conviction that he was an outcast from God, and destined to eternal condemnation, began at last to prey upon his health; and we may justifiably conjecture that the body

reacted upon the mind, and increased the ills which had caused its own. He knew not how to help himself, and could not resolve to communicate to others the state in which he believed himself to be. At last, as he one day entered the church where he had made his vow of chastity, his eye fell upon a picture of the Virgin, and his former confidence in the power of her intercession returned. To her, then, as being himself unworthy to apply to God, he addressed his request, that if he were destined to hate God everlastingly after death, she might procure for him grace to love Him, with all his heart, so long as he lived. The prayer itself, so simple and unselfish in its piety, lifted the load from his spirit; and one of the few mental struggles which darkened a life of almost unclouded trust in God was ended.

From Paris Francis proceeded to the University of Padua, there to study law, in which, after some years' diligence, he took his doctor's degree; and at last, in his twenty-sixth year, returned home, to commence in earnest the business of active life. His prospects were brilliant. He was the heir to the family honours; tall, well made, handsome, with an insinuating sweetness of address and manner; of spotless reputation; furnished with all the learning of the age, apt at all manly exercises. His mother's vow was, perhaps, half forgotten, or never meant more than that hearty piety which would certainly characterise her son in any condition; while M. de Boisy had made careful preparation for his entrance into public life, and expected to see his hopes and precautions justified by a brilliant success. He had already found a suitable match for his son in the only daughter of the Baron de Vegy; and had taken the necessary steps to procure for him a seat in the Senate of Chambery. Nor did the son at once break out in open opposition to the father's plans; he was received as an advocate by the Senate of Chambery, and began, with what-

ever reluctance, to pay his addresses to the lady. At length, however, the time came when a strong sense of duty interposed to cry halt to the natural docility of his disposition, and in his perplexity he applied to his cousin Louis de Sales, a canon of the chapter of Geneva, to undertake the task of communicating to his father, his desire to embrace the ecclesiastical life. The struggle was long and hard. M. de Boisy could not see with complacency his best hopes for his son thus suddenly overthrown; his wife protested against a decree of separation from the most beloved of her children. At length an argument, which had thrown an obstacle in the way of Francis, proved effectual with his parents. The dignity of provost of the chapter of Geneva became vacant, and Louis de Sales procured from the pope the nomination for his young cousin. The proceedings which followed are a curious proof of the inveterate irregularity of the Roman Church, even at a period of revived rigour, and in full view of Calvinist Geneva. While yet a layman, the chapter of the cathedral elected Francis their head, and the various canonical orders were successively conferred on him within a few months, in opposition, we are told, to his earnest desire to observe the prescribed intervals of time. And his first sermon is said to have given ample promise of his wonderful powers in the conversion of Protestants.

The Bishop of Geneva, though still a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, in right of his see, had been compelled in 1533 to abandon the city, and had fixed the capital of his diocese at Annecy, on the southern side of the lake. Before the Reformation, the bishops had vindicated their rights of sovereignty over the city, sometimes against the Dukes of Savoy, sometimes against the citizens, who claimed immunities of their own. Now, as the whole of the diocese lay in the States of Savoy, they were unquestionably subjects of the Duke, and united with him in enmity to the heretical

Republic. And it was in a campaign against Swiss Protestantism that Francis won his spurs as a champion of the Church. The duchy of Chablais, and the bailiwicks of Gex, Ternier, and Gaillard, which formed a small territory near the lake of Geneva, had been seized by the Swiss Cantons and converted to the Reformation, while the Duke of Savoy had been hard pressed in a war with Francis I. When the struggle was at an end, the Swiss were compelled to restore their conquest; but a clause was inserted in the treaty to prevent the re-establishment of the Catholic religion in the ceded territory. For some years the terms of the treaty were observed; when an ineffectual attempt of the Swiss to regain the Chablais was construed by the Duke, Charles Emanuel, into a release from his former engagement. He could not, he said, rely upon the fidelity of Protestant subjects, and therefore, in the year 1594, called upon the Bishop of Geneva to attempt to recover this part of his diocese to a truer allegiance to Church and State.

Francis de Sales had already given proof of his remarkable aptitude for missionary labour. He was indefatigable in preaching and catechizing in the villages round Annecy, and by his sweetness and humility won the hearts of all with whom he came in contact. For the performance of the practical labours of beneficence, of which he so strongly felt the necessity, he had established a Brotherhood of the Cross, whose duties were to instruct the ignorant, to visit the guilty and the sick, to assist in the burial of the poor, and to make up differences without an appeal to the law. It was in connection with this brotherhood, and in reply to a Calvinist minister who had written against the superstitious veneration paid to the sign of the Cross, that he wrote, some years later, his first work, "L'Étendard de la Croix," in which he takes up the accustomed position of his Church. By all these circumstances he was pointed out as the fittest instrument for the

conversion of the Chablais; and, in fact, when the bishop read the duke's letter to the clergy of Annecy and the neighbourhood, Francis and his cousin, Louis de Sales, were the only volunteers for the difficult, if not dangerous task.

The Chablais had now been Protestant for more than sixty years; and we might infer from the accounts of its conversion that the Catholic religion had almost ceased to exist. The most exaggerated reports prevailed as to what the heretics would dare in defence of their faith. The cousins were looked upon as soldiers might be who offered themselves for a forlorn hope; and M. and Madame de Boisy again ineffectually sought to interpose between their son and what he considered his duty. Indeed, the whole narrative is full of attempts of assassination made by the Protestants against Francis and his friends, which, nevertheless, they always succeed in evading; of Calvinist ministers with so little of controversial ardour as constantly to find ignominious excuses for failing at the appointed place and time of debate; of the utmost gentleness, and fairness, and bravery on one side, and an unvaried course of violence, and cowardice, and injustice on the other. Perhaps the Protestant accounts, had they been written with equal minuteness, might tell a different tale; and I shall at least use the critic's privilege of disbelief, more than once, in the progress of my brief narrative.

The missionaries entered the province on foot, in apostolic guise of poverty, and betook themselves, first, to Allinges, a fortified town, which was the residence of the Baron d'Hermance, the governor of the Chablais. This worthy noble, a zealous son of the Church, had already received orders from his master to support with all his authority the emissaries of the Bishop of Geneva; and the interpretation which he put upon his instructions may be gathered from the fact that he showed his guests the

garrison under arms and the whole array of his artillery, with the remark: "I hope that, if the Calvinists can make up their minds to hear you, we shall not need all this!" He advised them to begin their operations at Thonon, the chief town of the district, which was not so far from Allinges but that they might return thither every night, as the probability was that they would find no nearer lodging. So, in effect, it proved. Morning and night Francis was compelled to walk several miles through a mountainous country, suffering the inclemency of an Alpine winter, and though, beyond doubt, exposed to insults, if not to actual danger, always refusing the escort which the Baron d'Hermance pressed upon his acceptance. For he was not at this time prepared to call in the temporal power to aid, ever so little, the work of conversion which he hoped to accomplish by more legitimate means. And in answer to the sullen and almost violent reception which first met him at Thonon, he contented himself with procuring a letter from the governor to the magistrates of that town, explaining and limiting the objects of his mission. The Duke of Savoy, it said, in sending Francis de Sales into the province, had no intention of infringing upon the fullest liberty of conscience; else, why had he not made use of other emissaries than two poor priests, armed only with the Word of God? He would indeed be justified in doing more than he had done, by the prior violation of the treaty on the part of the Swiss; but his only object was, that those inhabitants of the Chablais who wished for instruction in the Catholic faith might be able to procure it. He reminded them, too, that the liberty of conscience of which they talked so much, ought to mean also liberty to embrace the Catholic faith: while he concluded by declaring that he took all converts under his special protection, and that he would hold the municipality of Thonon answerable both for their safety and for that of Francis de Sales.

It was long before our missionary succeeded in making even the faintest impression. By one consent the inhabitants stood aloof from him; and the precautions which he took not to excite their prejudices, his partial abandonment of the ecclesiastical garb, and the studied moderation of his language, were ineffectual to procure him an audience. But so much devotion and self-denial could not long remain absolutely fruitless, and the rude soldiers of Allinges acknowledged in the regularity and sobriety of their conduct, the force of the example daily set before them. The time at last arrived when he obtained the access which he wished to the convictions of the people of Thonon. He had been accustomed, in the absence of any opportunity for religious instruction, to make the acquaintance of the principal inhabitants in his secular character of the Seigneur de Sales, a nobleman of the same kingdom as themselves; and there were many who had been unable to withstand the frank courtesy of his address. While matters were still upon this footing, he was one day told, that two gentlemen, of whom he had some knowledge, had left the town for the purpose of fighting a duel. He hastily followed to the place of meeting, and found them already engaged in furious combat. His first impulse was to rush between them, at the peril of his life; his second, to represent to them the folly and wickedness of their conduct, and to implore them to be reconciled. The effort was successful: upon the mind of one, at least, a permanent impression was produced, and he surrendered himself to the teaching of his preserver. He did not fail to speak of the change in his opinions wrought by Francis, nor the reformation in his life to speak for him; so that in a little while his house became the scene of eager disputes as to the merits of the rival faiths, and, as was natural, many of the Protestant laymen succumbed to the superior skill of the professional controversialist. The Catholic biographers of Francis would have us

believe that their minds had been filled with atrocious calumnies against the Catholic Church, by their ministers; and that little more than a plain statement of the truth was needed for their conversion. Perhaps there was a truth on either side: the Calvinist teacher looked at the Church with the reformer's keen eye for abuses, and the schismatic's desire to justify his separation: while to Francis, full of the first ardour of the missionary life, she was still "the milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged; who feared no danger, for she knew no sin." And the step from one faith to the other was not so difficult as it now is in a Protestant country. If a force of public opinion threatened from Geneva, it was at least counterbalanced by the cannon of Allinges: the Reformation was not yet so old but that many men must have wavered between the two sides, always waiting to go over to the stronger; while the faith to which Francis laboured to recall the Protestants of the Chablais, was the faith which their ancestors, in common with all Christendom, had professed a hundred years before. So he slowly gathered converts, and in a while the Catholic Church had a firm footing in Thonon.

It is hard to disentangle the thread of historical truth from the tissue of exaggeration and falsehood, of which the Catholic account of the period which follows upon this manifestly consists. We may well believe that public opinion was violently excited against the successful preacher and his hearers; that every new conversion of a Protestant seigneur heightened the popular indignation, and that Francis may have been the object of fanatical insult, and even violence. But it is not so easy to believe that he constantly sought opportunities of public dispute with the Calvinist ministers, who as constantly failed to fulfil their engagements: that he converted 600 Protestants by one sermon on the Real Presence: that the dagger of the assassin was more than once aimed against his life, and as

often averted by an almost superhuman presence of mind and sweetness of disposition: that the same danger menaced his first convert, who rescued himself in the same way: and that a Calvinist minister was judicially condemned to death, and executed within two leagues of Allinges, for no other crime than the adoption of Catholicism.* The time was now come when the sincerity of the professions contained in D'Hermance's letter was to be tested. The Duke of Savoy and the Bishop of Geneva thought that mild measures had been employed long enough, and with sufficiently small success, to justify the trial of harsher means; and Francis was summoned to Turin, to confer with the duke as to their adoption.

It appeared at the council held in that city, that the duke's lay advisers were more timid in this matter than the clergy. It was they who urged the inconvenience of breaking a treaty, to which their powerful neighbour, the King of France, was a party; the impolicy of throwing the inhabitants of a frontier district into the arms of the Genevese; and the danger of weakening the state by the expulsion of useful citizens. Francis, on the other hand, supported by the Nuncio, made an adroit appeal to the duke's well known jealousy of his own authority, and represented that his rights as a sovereign, as well as his duty to the Church, combined to impose upon him the necessity of vindicating the truth upon the obstinate heretics, who for two years had shown themselves inaccessible to gentle persuasion. His recommendations were embodied in a memoir presented to the council. They were, 1st. The banishment of the Calvinist ministers from the states of Savoy, on the ground that they were perpetual centres of dis-

* The Curé de St. Sulpice finds great fault with Marsollier for this last assertion, and makes the Pays de Vaud, then subject to the Canton of Berne, the scene of the execution. This statement is hardly more credible than the other.

affection. 2nd. The absolute prohibition of heretical books, and the substitution of loyal and orthodox works, by the establishment of a Catholic printer at Annecy. 3rd. The removal of Protestants from all places of honour and profit. 4th. The re-establishment of the old parochial system: each parish having its priest; and the revenue which had been received during past years by the Calvinists to be restored for the rebuilding of churches. 5th. The maintenance, for a limited period, of eight chosen preachers to act as Catholic missionaries in the province. 6th. The immediate restoration to the Catholic worship of the church of St. Hippolytus, at Thonon. And 7th and lastly, the establishment, at the same place, of a College of Jesuits. It is somewhat to the credit of the duke's advisers, that these recommendations did not meet with unanimous approval. We find, nevertheless, on comparing them with the edict shortly afterwards issued, that it contains them all, with the exception of the second and fifth, and adds the important clause, that henceforward, the exercise of the Catholic religion only, shall be permitted in the Chablais and the Bailiwicks.

Flushed with victory, Francis prepared once more to cross the mountains to Thonon, though winter had already set in, in order that he might claim the church of St. Hippolytus for the festival of Christmas. The result was a riot, which, after the expenditure of much eloquence, ended in temporary submission to the mandate of the duke, and an appeal to him against an invasion of rights, which the Protestants of Thonon were unwilling to believe possible. No answer was vouchsafed to the letter of the Syndics, but about Lent (1597) a regiment marched into the town, and was quartered upon the inhabitants. Meanwhile the labours of the indefatigable missionary were more abundant than ever. Throughout the province he was to be seen preaching, disputing, catechising, visiting the sick, administering the rites of the Church to the dying,

careless of his own health or life, in a cause which he thought must be served at any cost. "It is not needful that I should live, but it is needful that the Church should be served," was his answer to the friends who entreated him to spare himself. And the catastrophe, for which so much preparation had been made, was now close at hand. The Cardinal de Medicis was on his return from France, where he had aided in negotiating the peace of Vervins, which had placed Henri IV. upon the throne, and the Duke of Savoy, who was also concerned in the treaty, had agreed to meet him at Thonon. There in spite of remonstrances from the ambassadors of the Swiss cantons, the fatal decree was promulgated. As many of the inhabitants as resolutely adhered to their Protestantism were expelled from the states of Savoy; those who remained were presumed to be Catholics, and debarred from the exercise of any other religion. Strong garrisons were distributed through the country, and "the peaceable re-establishment of the Catholic religion in the Chablais was an instance of the fact," as the biographer of Francis triumphantly remarks, "that when piety comes to the aid of policy, there is nothing which they are not able to accomplish."*

It is pleasant to turn from transactions which show how far an ecclesiastical theory can warp a kind heart and a lively sense of duty, to others which afford them freer play. Not long after these events the Bishop of Geneva cast his eyes upon Francis, as a fit coadjutor and successor in his see; and though, after a long hesitation, the dignity was

* It is right to state that the foregoing account of the conversion of the Chablais, drawn chiefly from Marsollier, and necessarily brief and imperfect, does not correspond in all its details with the later narrative of the Curé of St. Sulpice. But of two statements, neither of which has a very historical air, I have chosen that which appeared the most straightforward and least apologetical. The modern biographer explains and softens what his predecessor simply narrates. The main facts of the story are the same in both.

accepted, we may conclude that the "nolo episcopari" was more sincere in this case than it sometimes is, from the fact that in after life the new bishop repeatedly refused much higher preferment. He was accordingly, after due examination by Pope Clement VIII. consecrated coadjutor of Geneva, and Bishop of Nicopolis *in partibus*, and returned to the Chablais to watch, in his new character, over the completion of the work which he had begun.

A war which broke out in the year 1599 between Henri IV. and the Duke of Savoy had, among other effects, that of bringing Francis de Sales into close connection with the French monarch and his court. The objects and the conduct of the war do not here concern us; but by the treaty which brought it to a close, the bailiwick of Gex, a part of the diocese of Geneva, was given up to France in exchange for territory in the heart of Savoy, to which the French king laid claim. By this transference the Protestants of Gex seemed likely to escape the fate which had befallen their brethren in the Chablais, as they might now justly shelter themselves under the provisions of the edict of Nantes. To prevent such a misfortune, the new coadjutor was formally appointed by the Catholic clergy of the diocese their deputy to the court of France. His reception in Paris was brilliant; his birth and noble manners insured his social success; the king distinguished him by special marks of favour, entreating him to accept a French bishopric and a pension. All the rank and intellect of Paris crowded to hear his Lent sermons; more than one converted Protestant bore witness to the persuasiveness of his eloquence, and Cardinal du Perron, the wit and critic of his day, declared "that he himself was able to refute any heretic, but that God had reserved the gift of converting them for M. de Genève." But at the same time, his mission was almost wholly fruitless. Neither Henri nor his ministers were willing, even if they had dared, to break

faith with the Protestants, and Francis was told that in his dealings with the French portion of his diocese, he must rely only upon spiritual means for success. As he was returning home with this news, he received tidings of the death of his colleague, and on his arrival was saluted Bishop of Geneva.

He prepared himself for his new duties by a retreat of twenty days, which he employed partly in rigid self-examination, partly in laying down rules for his future conduct. He resolved to preserve the utmost simplicity in his dress, avoiding the use of expensive materials, and never appearing in public except in episcopal attire. The furniture of his house was equally plain. He kept no train of servants, and possessed neither horse nor carriage, visiting on foot even the remotest corners of his mountainous diocese. His table was simply, but plentifully supplied, that he might be able to discharge the duties of hospitality. His charities, both public and private, were almost boundless. His steward, we are told, often remonstrated with him without effect: and on one occasion, after having received a gay answer to some very serious expostulation, returned to his fellow-servants with the words: "Our master is a saint, but he will bring us all to the poor-house, and himself the first, if he goes on as he has begun." One cold day he gave away the very clothes from his back, and sat nearly naked for hours, till his valet discovered the secret. Another time he sold two silver candlesticks, belonging to his private chapel, on the ground that they could be applied to a better use. And a diamond ring, given him by a Princess of Piedmont, was said, half-satirically, to belong, not to the Bishop of Geneva, but to all the beggars in Annecy, so often was it pawned to satisfy their importunities.

In the performance of his episcopal duties he was regular and laborious, though he is not recorded to have practised

any extraordinary austerities. He conceived that to preach the Gospel was a bishop's first duty, and took every opportunity of addressing the people committed to his charge. He made himself acquainted with every parish of his diocese, penetrating even into the valleys about the roots of Mont Blanc; everywhere reforming scandals, reconciling differences, and listening to the petitions and confessions of the poorest and most ignorant. He was strict in his examination of candidates for orders, and resolutely refused to institute to benefices nominees of whose vocation he could not assure himself, believing that a community was better without a priest than with an immoral or incompetent one. He still, in his intervals of leisure, visited the prisons and the hospitals, not imagining that his dignity relieved him from any duty obligatory on a simple ecclesiastic. And no man was ever more fortunate in conciliating universal affection. He delighted in the company of little children. "Especially," * says a contemporary biographer, Père Louis de la Rivière, "did he seem to be in his element when he was surrounded by little children; they were his daily delight and pleasure; he caressed and fondled them with a smile and manner than which nothing could be more gracious. They, on their part, addressed him with all freedom and confidence, and he rarely left his house without seeing himself surrounded with a little troop of lambs, who recognised him for their loving shepherd, and came to ask his blessing." The mothers of Annecy, we are told on the same authority, thought that a look from the good bishop was effectual to soothe a fretful child. He conceived, too, that the religious instruction of children lay within the compass of his personal duty. "Every Sunday, and in time of Lent, on Saturdays after dinner," says La Rivière, "he taught the catechism to little children, about

* Quoted by Ste Beuve, vol. i. p. 236.

an hour before which, a herald, clad in a violet cassock, and ringing a bell, had made the circuit of the town, crying, 'Come to Christian teaching—come to Christian teaching—you shall be taught the way to Paradise.' I have had the honour of being present at this blessed catechism, and never did I see such a sight; this amiable and truly good father was seated as it were upon a throne, raised by some five steps; all the infant host surrounded him, and a great number of more instructed persons, who did not disdain to come thither for spiritual pasture. It was a rare contentment to hear how familiarly he expounded the rudiments of our faith; every moment rich comparisons were born in his mouth; he looked at his little audience, and his little audience looked at him; he made himself a child with them, to form in them the inner man and the perfect man according to Jesus Christ." Another anecdote brings into strong relief the same feature of his character. A mad priest was confined in the prison of the diocese, whose fits of fury, aggravated, in all likelihood, by harsh treatment, were the terror of his keepers. The bishop disregarding the opposition of his attendants, one day ordered his cell to be opened, walked boldly up to him, took him by the hand, and saying, "My brother, have faith in God," laid his other hand upon his head, and began to smooth his entangled hair. The fit passed away, never to return, and Francis took the cured madman with him to his own house, clothed him decently, entertained him at his table, and sent him home a sound man in mind and body. The story is recorded among the miracles of St. Francis de Sales: probably the experience of modern lunatic asylums might supply another explanation.

The "Introduction à la Vie Dévote," the first work which Francis published after his elevation, is said to have owed its origin to a remark uttered by Henri IV., who deploring (with how good a grace we cannot tell) the libertinism

common at his court, expressed a wish that some competent person would write a book to teach the secret of the Christian life to those who were compelled to remain in close intercourse with the world; in short, a species of "Christianity made easy," for the use of courtiers and other worldly persons. Without supposing that Francis de Sales was willing to contemplate Christian duty from the point of view of so notorious a profligate as Henri, he was evidently fitted, both by his acquaintance with the society of courts, and his deliberate opposition to excessive austerity, to undertake the task. The book was received with shouts of applause by many of the great and noble. Henri IV. joined with James I. of England in its praise. In the first half century after its appearance it ran through forty editions, while one austere monk, it is said, after declaiming against it in the pulpit, deliberately tore it in pieces in face of his audience. A similar variety of opinion was expressed about his other great work, the "Théotime, ou Traité de l'Amour de Dieu." In each we see the same characreristics: a mystic piety expressing itself as mysticism is wont to do, in great richness of metaphor; a constant effort to find analogies in the operations of nature and of grace; a tenderness of sympathy which sometimes approaches the confines of weakness; a view of God's grace and man's nature, which seems formed on the principle of contrariety to the Calvinism which he so combated; and everywhere the most submissive trust in God and complete resignation to his will. What he conceives to be the noblest attitude of a human soul towards God he expresses in these words—"Ask for nothing, desire nothing, refuse nothing." This was the state of mind to which he strove to elevate himself, and this the ideal which he proposed to the nuns of the Visitation, while he absolved them from all but ordinary privations and austerities. In a word, did we regard his writings only, Francis de Sales must be en-

rolled among the mystics: it was from his life that he derived his title to be called a Saint.

Though these works passed through many editions, and were read by thousands; though "L'Esprit de St. Francis de Sales," by his friend and pupil Camus, bishop of Bellay, is still in one form or other, a favourite work with Catholic readers, the monument of his genius by which he is best known is the Order of the Visitation, which he founded in conjunction with his celebrated friend Madame de Chantal. There was something almost feminine in the tenderness of his own disposition, and the strength of his affections enabled him to understand and sympathise with the holy ecstasies into which the religion of women often developes itself. Few men, therefore, were more fitted to undertake the direction of a female community, or to fill the delicate and perilous post of adviser to its head. Of his helper, who was for many years after his death the friend and correspondent of Angélique Arnauld, I must needs say a word or two.

Jeanne Françoise Fremiot (whose son's daughter was the celebrated Madame de Sevigné*,) was the daughter of Benigne Fremiot, President à Mortier of the Parliament of Burgundy, and was born at Dijon, January 23rd, 1572. Her family was among the oldest of the province; she and her sister both made noble alliances; and her only brother, André Fremiot, became in his father's lifetime Archbishop of Bourges. She lost her mother at a very early age, but her father, a man of sincere piety, laboured to repair as far as possible so great a loss, by paying close personal attention to the education of his daughter. At the age of twenty, she was married to the Baron de Chantal, a young nobleman of many excellent qualities, whose

* Madame de Sevigné tells us more than once, in her incomparable letters, that in certain convents of the Visitation she was looked upon as a "living relic" of her grandmother.

often proved courage and loyalty had attracted the favour of Henri IV. The marriage was a happy one; M. de Chantal entrusted to his wife the whole management of his estate and household, which she strove to regulate on a truly Christian model; a son and three daughters were born in rapid succession, and a bright domestic prospect seemed to open before them, when an unexpected calamity dashed all their hopes to the ground. M. de Chantal was accidentally shot by a kinsman while hunting, and died after a few days' suffering. His last words were to entreat his wife, and to command his son, never to think of exacting vengeance for his death. Madame de Chantal proved at once the forgivingness of her own disposition, and her respect for her husband's wishes, by presenting at the font, before many months had passed, the child of him who had made her a widow, and her children orphans.

Her situation was terribly changed; a widow at twenty-seven, she was burdened with the education of four young children; and for those children's sake compelled to live with her husband's father, an old man, infirm in health and temper, and a slave to the caprices of a favourite servant. It is impossible to say at how early a period these circumstances may have forced upon Madame de Chantal's naturally devout mind the thought of finally retiring from the world. She at once sought consolation for the loss of her husband in labours of beneficence and efforts of self-denial. She withdrew herself from general society, dismissed many of her servants, retrenched all luxuries and superfluities of dress, and divided her time between the education of her children, the care of the poor and the sick, and private devotion. The stories which are told of her heroic patience in attending upon the sick, are countless. She seemed to delight in lavishing tender care upon some poor creature, the very horror and noisomeness of whose disease had driven away his natural

attendants. Nor was hers a vicarious benevolence. With her own hands she assuaged the sufferings of these unfortunates, whispering meanwhile words of patience and consolation; and closed the eyes of one sufferer only to transfer her good offices to the bedside of another.

The annoyances which she bore in her father-in-law's house were many, but her chief unhappiness arose from the want which Angélique Arnauld so long felt, — the want of a fit spiritual guide. Her first confessor was unable to understand her; another, to whom she applied, first bound her by a vow to consult no other than himself, and then overwhelmed her with a multitude of minute instructions, which harassed, rather than directed and strengthened her faculties. But in the year 1604 she went to Dijon, at her father's invitation, to hear the Bishop of Geneva preach a series of Lent sermons. The impression made upon her by these was deepened by private intercourse with the preacher, and after many struggles of conscience, arising from the vow she had made to her former confessor, she resolved to put herself under his direction. A peace of mind to which she had long been a stranger was the immediate result, and though her old scruples and difficulties often recurred, a letter from her sympathising friend, or such brief interviews as could be arranged from year to year, were always effectual to restore her wonted calmness.

It was not, however, till the year 1609, that Madame de Chantal finally resolved to abandon the world. One of her daughters was on the point of marriage with a brother of the Bishop of Geneva, and she felt that she might safely trust to her father the education of her remaining children. She was not allowed, however, to accomplish her purpose without a struggle; her father, the Baron de Chantal, and the Archbishop of Bourges all united to remonstrate with her, and her children had still an evident claim upon her

time and watchfulness. She decided upon her course in obedience to a real, if mistaken sense of duty; not altogether unmoved, perhaps, by a conscious vocation to a great work in the Church. Her children's affairs were in perfect order; she hoped still to be able to exercise a general supervision over their conduct; she gave up all she possessed to enter the cloister without a dowry; and she conceived that having lived so long for her children and the world, she had henceforward a right to live for herself and for God. She felt, perhaps, something of what might be said on the Protestant side of the question, when, the sacrifice once made, she experienced what her biographer calls "a temptation," and asked herself, in deep bitterness of spirit, whether, after all, she had really done her duty.

The Order of the Visitation which Francis de Sales, in conjunction with Madame de Chantal, was now about to found, was intended to afford a refuge from the world not only to those to whom other religious communities were open, but to widows, as well as aged and infirm persons, who might be sincerely anxious to lead a holy life, yet to whom the practice of monastic austerity was impossible. The time of the professed nuns was to be spent, not in the observance of severe conventual duties, not even so prevailingly in prayer — as in a devout recognition of the presence of God, in hearty submission to his will, and above all, in active labours of beneficence. Neither birth nor wealth was a necessary condition for entrance into the order; but a true vocation to a life of piety and love. Such were the principles upon which the first convent of the Visitation, of which Madame de Chantal was first nun and first abbess, was founded at Annecy, on Trinity Sunday, 1610. Before long, however, its fame spread beyond the limits of Savoy. In 1615, the Cardinal de Marquemont, Archbishop of Lyons, besought La Mère de Chantal to visit

his episcopal city, and lay the foundation of a second house of the order. The journey was not without important effects. The cardinal wished to erect the new institution, which was yet no more than a congregation, into a religious order, with fixed rules and vows, fortified by papal sanction. After much negotiation he obtained the consent of Francis to his scheme, though the latter was naturally unwilling to give up so important a feature of his plan, as the employment of his nuns in visiting the sick and the poor. But strict religious seclusion was thought to be indispensable to a regular convent, and though provision was made for the establishment of hospitals in connection with houses of the Visitation, the glory of founding an order of Sisters of Mercy was left to Vincent de Paul. The rule of Augustine was, with some modifications, adopted; a constitution was carefully drawn up by the Bishop of Geneva, and the whole received the approval of Pope Paul V., on the 23rd April, 1618. The changes made by the Cardinal de Marquemont, however we may regret the departure from the original scheme, probably conduced to the wonderful success which awaited the new order. Before the death of Francis, in 1622, thirteen monasteries of the Visitation had been established in different cities of France and Savoy. When Jeanne de Chantal died, in 1641, she had been concerned in the foundation of no fewer than eighty-seven. In the middle of the last century, the order counted more than one hundred and fifty convents, in almost all Catholic countries of Europe.

The single event in the life of Francis de Sales which I have yet to mention is that second journey to Paris in 1612, in which he became the friend and confessor of Angélique Arnauld. He went thither in the train of the Cardinal of Savoy, whose errand was to ask the hand of a French princess for the Prince of Piedmont; and left his diocese in the efficient hands of his brother, Jean François de Sales,

Bishop of Chalcedon, his coadjutor and successor. He was welcomed as before: the churches in which he preached were crowded: his time was occupied with noble penitents: and brilliant offers were made to him to induce him to leave his poor diocese and connect himself with the French Church. In particular, De Retz*, then Archbishop of Paris, wished to associate him with himself in that metropolitan see—an offer which was at once refused, as had before been the case with that of a cardinal's hat. It concerns us more in this place to note his brief intercourse with the Arnaulds and with Port Royal. [illegible] daughter [illegible] M. de Bonnueil, Introducteur des Ambassadeurs, was at the time a novice at Maubuisson, to whom her father wished that M. de Genève should administer the rite of confirmation. The ceremony, which took place on the 5th of April, 1619, was an opportunity which Angélique had long desired. Her former confessors had all failed to exercise over her the wise control which she felt she needed: the reputed sanctity of Francis, his friendship with Madame de Chantal, and their joint success as founders of a new monastic order, were known to her; and she hoped to find in him the satisfaction of every spiritual want. She was not disappointed. The bishop at once undertook the direction of her conscience: and the close intercourse thus begun was continued by letter till the death of Francis in 1622. Many of his published letters—those namely directed "A une Abbesse," were addressed to her: many more she withheld from the press, as too laudatory of herself. During his stay in Paris, he paid repeated visits to Maubuisson, as well as to Port Royal, and to Andilly. And when on his departure, he made known the excellent qualities of Angélique to Madame de Chantal, a warm friendship, terminating only with the life of the latter, was the result.†

* The first cardinal of the House of Gondi; great uncle of the "coadjutor," the author of the Mémoires and the Frondeur.

† Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 148, 313; vol. ii. p. 299.

It is interesting, in connection with the charges of weakness and want of masculine vigour brought against Francis de Sales, to note the estimate of his character formed by Angélique Arnauld. To her, at least, he did not show himself the mild accommodating director which some others represented him to be. She speaks of him as attaching a value to the *least important acts and most* definite moral [illegible]ns; and as *filled with pity and indignation* transitory emoti[illegible]l sins of the Church. *In all probability,* at the wrongs an[illegible] could make large dem[illegible]nds upon will and he knew where he [illegible]e where severity could be borne. conscience, and wa[illegible] death, Angélique writes in her Thus, many yea[illegible] memoirs: "If [illegible]y man had remained in France, I believe that I sh[illegible] have derived great benefit from his guidance, which was by no means weak and over-mild, as many have believed it to be." In a letter to Madame de Chantal, dated in 1638, she says that she sees no difference between the method of St. Francis de Sales, in the conduct of souls, and that of M. de St. Cyran, a declaration which we shall presently be able to appreciate. And to her nephew, Le Maître, she said, in 1653: "When God brought M. de Genève to me in 1619, I found in him so great a sincerity, accompanied by so much grace and light for my particular wants, that I placed my heart in his hands, without any reserve; finding in him alone more than in all my other confessors."*

At the same time it must not be forgotten, that the theological tendencies which have made Port Royal famous had not developed themselves in 1619, and that Francis de Sales cannot be claimed as a friend to the opinions of Jansen and St. Cyran. Indeed, although the same awakening of religious life in the church showed itself in the institution of the Visitation and the reform of Port Royal, it is not

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 315; vol. ii. p. 301. Lettres de la Mère Ang. vol. i. p. 144.

difficult to predict that had Francis de Sales lived thirty years later, he would have been neither friend nor confessor to Angélique Arnauld. A believer in the free grace of God, and the natural inclination of the human heart to love Him, he was in direct opposition to the half Calvinistic doctrines of grace and predestination which Jansen distilled from the pages of Augustine. We have already seen that he could persecute: and we may easily suppose that he would have believed Port Royal to be the nest of concealed Protestantism which its enemies declared it, and would have thrown the weight of his virtues into the scale of detraction. It is, perhaps, well for his fame that he knew Port Royal when no suspicion of heresy forbade him to honour its saintly abbess, rather than at a time when he might have joined in petty persecutions of conscientious women, and drawn upon himself the satire of Pascal and the indignant logic of Arnauld.

He died at Lyons on the 28th December, 1622, not long after the visit to Paris of which I have spoken. On the 19th of April, 1665, Pope Alexander VII. gave him a place in the heavenly hierarchy, after due authentication of the miracles which he had wrought, living and dead. In 1767, Clement XIII. accorded the same honour to his friend and fellow-worker, Madame de Chantal.

It is very difficult to form a [illegible] idea of Francis de Sales from the mass of incredible legends and indiscriminate panegyric which make up his biography. The miracles which he is recorded to have wrought far surpass in number and variety those of the New Testament. The list to which La Mère de Chaugy, Superior of the Visitation, deposed on oath, and which therefore challenges the belief of the faithful, commences with the portentous article of thirty-seven persons raised from the dead, and after running through almost every form of human ailment, relieved at the intercession of the saint, concludes with

"more than 6000 persons cured of pestilential fevers, and many towns and villages preserved from the plague, at the time when Savoy was afflicted with that scourge."* Seven of these marvels are solemnly recited by the Pope in the bull of canonisation, and thereby placed to Catholic faith beyond the possibility of doubt. The story of those dealings with Protestants, which occupied a great part of his active life, is almost as hard to receive. It is one of unbounded and all but unvaried success. He has only to show himself and to speak in order to conquer. He is never able to bring the Calvinist ministers of Geneva or France—men usually not averse to controversy—to open conference. They challenge, they bully; but when the time draws near, they make shuffling excuses, and their followers, disgusted with a cause, apparently incapable of defence, are converted by hundreds. We search in vain through the record of the good bishop's arguments for any new contribution to the Catholic controversy. Even when the Pope sends him to try his powers of conversion upon the arch-Calvinist, Theodore Beza,—and we are told that the heresiarch trembled and turned pale, and would have become Catholic had he dared,—the dilemma proposed by Francis is amusingly simple, and one which Beza must have heard a hundred times before. If we may judge by the sermons which are [illegible], his preaching drew its power rather from his known sanctity and evident earnestness than from the force of his language or the depth of his thought. So, too, the "Esprit de St. Francis de Sales," the monument in six volumes, which the Bishop of Bellay erected to his memory, contains innumerable holy sayings, but not many profound or original ones.

The explanation of the facts, which, after making what deduction we will from the Catholic accounts, still remain

* Vie de St. Francis, vol ii. p. 518.

sufficiently striking, must be found in the singular force and symmetry of his character. Natural disposition, education, circumstance, co-operated to mould him into the champion of the Church in the hour of her need. His sweet temper, which made him the ideal of childish saintliness, was developed in after life into a suavity of disposition, a graciousness of demeanour, an equanimity of feeling and of speech, an insinuating kindliness, which, while his friends compared it to the angelic mood, his enemies accused of weakness and base compliance. But, joined to a perfect acquaintance with the points in debate between Catholics and Protestants, it was his chief weapon against heresy. "More flies are caught," he was wont to say, "with one spoonful of honey than with ten barrels of vinegar." He laid his episcopal dignity aside when the question was of converting a Calvinist: he patiently listened to the longest statement, and unravelled every difficulty; the ardour of his Italian nature lent pathos to his entreaties; the manifest holiness of his life added strength to his arguments. If any sneered at the pomp and wealth of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, he could truly declare that the Genevese Calvinists had left him no more than the necessaries of life. If any accused the bishops of idleness and worldliness, his constant labours in preaching and catechising through his diocese were a sufficient reply. And another element of success was his undoubting faith in his own Church. He does not appear to have had an intellectual or a moral difficulty in connection with the Catholic system. His devotion to the Papacy, his respect for the bishops, was unbounded. He lived at a time when the Society of Jesus was concerned in more than one royal assassination in France, but his admiration of the Order never wavered. Whatever the Church approved was right; salvation was impossible beyond her pale; and it was, therefore, a work of love, to reconcile heretics and sinners

to the great mother of souls. In this lies the secret of his life.

It would hardly be unfair to take Francis de Sales as the type of modern Roman Catholic saintliness. Nor is his a character which it would be easy to parallel in a Protestant church. However sincere our admiration of his active and self-denying beneficence, we might be inclined to accuse his celibacy of ascetism, his humility of untruthfulness, his piety of mysticism, his obedience to the Church of servility. And yet, if these accusations be well founded, the fault lies not with the man, but with the system. By help of a happy nature, but also by dint of long labour and self-control, he raised himself to the height of the holiness which his Church enjoined, and which alone he recognised as holy. The character is symmetrical, but the symmetry resembles the result, not of growth, but of compression. It is the regularity of some metal tree, a masterpiece of the founder's art, where all the branches observe due limits, and every leaf is in its place; not the free grace of a spreading beech, which has striven upwards to the light in its own way, and whose limbs have flung themselves abroad, as the rains and winds of heaven have been pleased to nourish or to fan them.

VII.

THE period [illegible] now arrived [illegible] history of Port Royal at which we have more than an ins[illegible] of transition. It had hitherto been no order, elevated into [illegible]ificant offshoot of a rich and powerful a movement of [illegible] temporary and limited notoriety by was a not uncommon [illegible]hich, under various modifications, But it remained to be seen [illegible]omenon of the monastic life. had within it any element of per[illegible]her the new-born devotion extend it to Maubuisson must be con[illegible]nce. The attempt to partially failed. Religious asceticism and [illegible]ed to have at least tion are forces which act and react upon each oth[illegible]pular admira- the zeal for reform was characterised by a discre[illegible]; but her moderation ill fitted to feed the flame of public enthu- siasm. And there seems little reason to doubt, that event. which were noised abroad by Angélique's powerful friends in the court and parliament of the near capital, might have passed almost unnoticed into forgetfulness, if they had occurred in some quiet corner of Provence or Lorraine.

The object of the present chapter is to trace the fortunes of the monastery in its passage, if I may so speak, from a private to a public station; from a happy obscurity which attracted no envious rivalry, and incurred no theological suspicion, to a fellowship with great names in letters and religion, which proved fruitful in glory and misfortune. The proximate cause of this increased notoriety was the removal of the monastery to Paris, where it not only obtained royal patronage, but entered into a dangerous, if unconscious, emulation with other religious houses. Nevertheless, the real origin of the misfortunes of Port Royal is to be found

in the desire of La Mère Angélique to procure fi[illegible]he direction for herself and the nuns under her c[illegible]at is theory of the Roman Catholic Church in re[illegible]estant called the conduct of souls, is not eas[illegible]l moral conscience to understand. For while [illegible] to reduce law into a positive, external command, [illegible]ossible, and such command to the most concrete [illegible]retation of the compels the penitent to receive his i[illegible], and the injunc- will of God, the decisions of the Chu[illegible]nd of his confessor. tions of conscience, from the single to which the Christian Obedience is the highest moral id is bound to place itself in can attain, and every conscien individual mind, duly autho- religious subjection to so[illegible]n it. And yet it is easy to see rised to guide and g[illegible] arise from the application of such a what difficulties conscience and a vigorous will. Sometimes, heory to a l[illegible]ay be noticed that an instinctive subtlety and [illegible]ed, it [illegible] of moral judgment are the property of minds wh[illegible] are not distinguished by any marked intellectual superiority; which, as some men have a farther vision or a quicker hearing than others, are endowed with a delicate perception of shades of right and wrong. Such a one seems to have been Singlin, whom we shall hereafter learn to know as the director of minds far surpassing his own in energy and comprehensiveness. But at this turning point in Angélique's career, when the immediate work to which she had applied herself seemed completed, and the eager spirit was longing for fresh fields of conflict and victory, she needed, if she were to realise the theory of moral obedience at all, some direction for her thoughts and purposes, as well as a judge to overrule or confirm the decisions of her conscience. We have already alluded to her early difficulties in this respect; we have seen how she found all desire realised in Francis de Sales. And now she once more discovered the friend she needed in the Abbé de St. Cyran, an ecclesiastic

whose virtues made him, in the estimation of his disciples, a saint, whose originality of theological thought tempted his enemies to elevate him into an heresiarch. The man who was the friend of Jansen, and of whom Richelieu was jealous, needed no more to draw down upon himself the anger of Church and State, and to involve all who loved and listened to him in the same condemnation.

A sanitary reformer of the present day would easily have predicted the events which speedily followed Angélique's return from Maubuisson. Eighty nuns were crowded into buildings which, a few years before, had been thought barely sufficient for sixteen. The malaria from the undrained valley of Port Royal found the feeble frames of the sisters an easy prey to its poisonous breath. The fasts were frequent, the vigils long; even a walk in the convent garden regarded as an unnecessary, if not a pernicious luxury. And so, as Angélique records, quite unsuspicious of the cause of the mortality, the infirmary was always full, and within two years, no fewer than fifteen of the sisters died. At last a natural anxiety for the health of her five daughters impelled Madame Arnauld to effect, if possible, the removal of the monastery to Paris. She had long entertained such a project, but the time for its accomplishment had not hitherto presented itself. She was herself unsettled; her heart was at Port Royal; yet she could not resolve altogether to forsake, as the cloister life would necessitate, her eldest daughter, Madame Le Maître, whose marriage had been a fruitful source of unhappiness. But at the profession of a nun, in 1624, her fluctuating desires for a religious life were so far reawakened and confirmed, that she confided to her children this sole obstacle to her taking the veil; while, at the same time, she put herself under the spiritual direction of Angélique, especially confessing how often her more worldly instincts had rebelled against the apparently ruinous disinterestedness with which

the affairs of the abbey were managed. At last a compromise was effected between the rival duties. Madame Arnauld resolved to make her profession in Port Royal, and Angélique acceded to the proposition for removing the monastery to Paris.*

The enterprise was not unattended with difficulty; permission was to be obtained from both the Archbishop of Paris and the Abbot of Citeaux: a royal license for the removal of the nuns was necessary, and a suitable house for the reception of so large a community not easy to be found. After much search, a building called the Hôtel de Clugni, in the Fauxbourg St. Jacques, was selected, and finally bought at the price of 24,000 livres. The necessity for removal was pressing, for in 1625, the year in which Port Royal was deserted, no fewer than twelve nuns fell victims to the unwholesome exhalations of the valley. The new abode was therefore prepared in all haste for the reception of the survivors, and on the 18th June the first detachment arrived in Paris. The inconveniences experienced when all were assembled in the new home were not few. The choir could not contain a fourth part of the community. At mealtimes successive parties occupied the refectory. Dormitories were hastily constructed in the garrets. "But nevertheless," writes Angélique, "the sisters were content, and as regular and silent as if they had been inmates of the most convenient monastery in France."† The new house was henceforth known by the name of Port Royal de Paris. The old one, now deserted, except by the necessary labourers on the estate, and by a chaplain, whose duty it was to maintain regular services in the church, was distinguished as Port Royal des Champs.

The transition had been accompanied by every mark of royal favour. Louis XIII. had expressly authorised it: the

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 323. Guilbert, vol. ix. p. 211.

† Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 324.

Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis, in letters-patent of her own, had declared herself foundress of the translated monastery. But no substantial benefaction had accompanied this gracious act of recognition, and the pressure of poverty began to be felt more than ever. The costs of a double establishment diminished the revenues of the abbey, and with the utmost economy, living at Paris was dearer than at Port Royal. "I had never borrowed," says Angélique, "in whatever necessity we might have been, except perhaps some small sum, which I returned as soon as I could. Nevertheless, in this strait, God gave us grace to refuse three maidens of condition, nieces of one of our best friends, with whom we should have received at least 39,000 livres, because I well knew that they wished to make nuns of these girls only that they might obtain richer matches for their two sisters."* Perhaps, after all, the trials of poverty were not so hard to bear as those arising from the caprices of well-meaning benefactors. The chronicles of the abbey contain the story of a rich widow, Madame de Pont Carré, who about this time earnestly entreated admittance. Her wants were few: room for her bed, a yard's breadth round it, and a lay sister to wait upon her; in exchange for which she made a gift to the community of 24,000 livres. The money itself was the first evil; Angélique was persuaded to expend it in building a great dormitory; the plan was so magnificent that the sum hardly sufficed to lay the foundations, while to complete the edifice, and to pay the interest of the debt, loans to the amount of 136,000 livres were contracted. Then, after a while, Madame de Pont Carré began to play the great lady in the house: she had a suite of apartments splendidly decorated and furnished, and the terrace before her windows was shaded with orange-trees, for which the good sisters

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 324.

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were expected to fetch water. She meddled in the internal management of the community, and, like any fashionable woman, kept an agent outside to manage her secular affairs, and execute her little commissions. She attempted to make a party for herself, and rebelled with impotent wrath, when some necessary discipline was mildly enforced against her. At last, after many years, La Mère Angélique resolved to take the only remaining course: to repay the sum which she had originally made over to the convent, and to request her to leave it. The offer was readily accepted; the acceptance after a few months as bitterly repented; but the nuns of Port Royal had learned wisdom from experience, and kept their gates resolutely closed against Madame de Pont Carré.*

The spiritual adviser of Port Royal during this period, not a very wise one, as the event proved, was Sebastien Zamet, Bishop of Langres. The father of this prelate, also Sebastien Zamet, had come into France in the train of the Medicis, and by his financial talents, as well as by his obsequious ministry to the pleasures of Henri IV., had amassed an enormous fortune. The rise of the son in the Church may thus be easily explained. He was first made almoner to Marie de Medicis, and subsequently elevated to the see of Langres. For some years he distinguished himself only by the assiduity with which he attended to his interests at court, and by the splendour with which he surrounded his episcopal functions. But about the year 1623 a severe illness produced a sudden and apparently complete change in his character. His austerity became as conspicuous as had been his worldliness. He entirely renounced the court, and went to reside in his diocese; giving up all his time to its practical superintendence, and visiting on foot its several parishes. He formed a connection with the heads of the Congregation of

* In the Mém. pour servir, a separate memoir is devoted to Madame de Pont Carré, vol. i. p. 495.

the Oratory, then in the first flush of its zeal and success, and put himself under the spiritual guidance of a priest of that order. With an ardour, often characteristic of such converts, he passed many hours, both of the day and night, in prayers and tears; and spoke of the contrast between things temporal and spiritual with an unction which perhaps proceeded from his accurate acquaintance with the former. Such was the man to whom Angélique, not unnaturally relying on the reality of a conversion, in many respects resembling her own, turned for advice and direction. There existed also a specific bond of union between them. The attempt at Maubuisson was not the only effort of reform which the abbess and nuns of Port Royal had made. Between the years 1623 and 1630 they had responded to requests for aid in the good work from the Cistercian convents of Lys, Poissi, Gif, Les Isles à Auxerre, Gomer Fontaine, and St. Aubin; and had laboured in these places with more or less perseverance and success. Now one of the first manifestations of new life in the diocese of Langres had been the reformation of the Cistercian house of Tard, near Dijon; in discussing which with La Mère de Chantal, the bishop had learned many particulars of Angélique and her reforms at Port Royal and Maubuisson. An assembly of the clergy brought him to Paris in the year 1625, and he eagerly sought the acquaintance of Angélique, who on her part gladly accepted the friendship of so pious a prelate. Before long he had so won her confidence, that she communicated to him her most secret thoughts and wishes; among others, the desire which she still cherished of abandoning her charge to more experienced hands, and entering the Order of the Visitation. Perhaps the strenuous opposition which M. de Langres made to this plan conciliated still more the confidence of one to whose conscience duty always presented itself in the guise of self-denial. In obedience to his wishes, she again re-

peated her vows in the convent chapel, and thenceforward abode in peace of mind.

The first result of M. de Langres' influence was that his allies, the fathers of the Oratory, were introduced into the convent as confessors. A gradual but marked change in the spirit of the community ensued. The two principles upon which Angélique had hitherto proceeded were simplicity and self-denial. She had discouraged any excessive self-questioning, and taught the sisters to believe that, while mortifying the flesh, and rigidly adhering to the conventual rule, they were walking in the way of duty. She was no friend to extasies, and distrusted the reality of alleged revelations. Her niece and biographer assures us, that no subject was so absolutely distasteful to her as the miracles which her admirers ascribed to her prayers and sanctity. Against this spirit a reaction now began to set in. The sisters were encouraged to confess frequently, to recount in unnecessary detail their thoughts and emotions, and to attribute all to the special providence of God, operating in them the work of sanctification. The most zealous of the fathers entered into correspondence with their penitents, and magnified into revelations from heaven all the devotional raptures which are at once the joy and the bane of a life given up to prayer. To such an extent did this self-confidence proceed, that on one occasion (we must suppose in the absence of Angélique, on one of her many missions of reform) the attempt was made to storm the gates of Heaven, and to work a miracle. The poor deaf and dumb sister, already mentioned as one of the original inmates of Port Royal, was selected as the subject of the experiment. A whole night was accordingly spent in watching and prayer before the Host; and the dumb woman, placed in the middle of the choir, surrounded by sixteen candles, in honour of the sixteen attributes of Christ in the Eucha-

rist, was repeatedly adjured to speak. It is hardly needful to add that the experiment totally failed; except in so far as it may for a time have cooled the mischievous enthusiasm of the sisters and their ghostly advisers.

This was, however, only the beginning of changes, which at one time seemed to threaten the entire relapse of Port Royal into the "customs" of the Cistercian Order. For each of the many schemes now inaugurated helped to draw away the spirit of the house from the old simplicity and austerity. In 1624 the abbot of Clairvaux, and in 1625 the abbot of Citeaux, the two heads of the order, who were both friends of reform, had died; while the successor of the latter was openly hostile to such plans as those of Angélique, and soon took occasion to manifest his hostility by pronouncing sentence of deprivation on the Abbé de la Charmoye, the visitor and superior of Port Royal. The obvious remedy against these threatening evils was to obtain a bull from Rome, which should transfer the monastery from the jurisdiction of M. de Citeaux to that of the ordinary, the Archbishop of Paris. This was effected in 1627. But in 1629 M. de Langres obtained the same boon for the Cistercian nunnery of Tard, near Dijon, in the reform of which he had himself been concerned, and conceived the idea of uniting the two abbeys as the first step towards the foundation of a new monastic order. Accordingly, Agnès Arnauld and another sister were sent to Dijon, in exchange for the abbess of that convent, La Mère Jeanne de St. Joseph, who took up her abode in Port Royal de Paris. All was now prepared for the execution of a purpose which Angélique had long had at heart. She besought the King, through the medium of the Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis, to allow her to resign her dignity, and to sanction a free triennial election of an abbess by the whole sisterhood. The rare disinterestedness of such a request went far to secure the royal approval; the necessary letters-patent were issued;

Angélique and Agnès formally resigned their dignities as abbess and coadjutrix, and La Mère Geneviève de St Augustine was elected for three years on the 23rd July, 1630.*

The period which immediately succeeded was a very painful one for Angélique. It could not in any case have been easy to obey where she had been so long accustomed to command; but it was harder still to see her work gradually undermined before her eyes. The new abbess, although one of the novices whom Angélique had received at Maubuisson, had passed some time at the monastery of Tard, and had imbibed its spirit, while the former abbess of that place was chosen prioress, and lent all the weight of her authority to the schemes of M. de Langres. The simplicity of life which had been the rule at Port Royal, was stigmatised as coarse; and practices which had helped to nourish a modest and retiring austerity were exchanged for others more provocative of the world's admiration. Noble birth was made a necessary qualification for admission into the house. The services in the convent church were thrown open to the public; celebrated preachers were invited to render them more attractive; and perfumes and flowers lent their aid to captivate the soul by charming the senses. The resources of a French kitchen were employed to give all possible variety to the simple meals prescribed by the rules of the order; and the delf which had replaced the porcelain was in its turn replaced. But then as a counterpoise to all this, the most extraordinary austerities were encouraged: terrible scourgings: frequent and long fasts: the most startling and humiliating penances. No wonder that Angélique mourned secretly over this disappearance of the self-forgetting piety, the constant yet moderate mortification which she had striven to encourage. "I was often troubled,"

* *Vide* a memoir by Angélique herself on the subject of the change of jurisdiction. Mém. pour servir, vol. i. p. 371 ; also vol. i. p. 331.

she says, "with all this, but I said nothing; and when I asked myself in secret, to what good purpose is it? I answered, to destroy my confidence in my own judgment."*

Nor were the trials to which she was purposely subjected easy to endure. She entered once more upon her noviciate, in order to learn the forgotten habit of obedience, and at the expiration of the period quietly took her place among the sisterhood, setting a strong watch upon her lips lest any chance word of command or reproach might escape them. But it is impossible to explain the annoyances and humiliations to which she was subjected, except on the supposition that female spite sought its gratification under pretence of maintaining the rigour of monastic discipline. The progress of her unfinished plans was needlessly thwarted. She was denied permission to hold any communication with her friends at the parlour wicket. For a time she was forbidden to speak to any of the sisterhood. She was not even allowed to correspond with her sister Agnès, now abbess of Tard. The letters which she had received from Francis de Sales, and which she prized as inestimable relics, were taken from her and used to cover jars of preserves. The sister whose duty it was to read aloud in the refectory, was more than once instructed to read a life of Angélique, in which the grossest insults were heaped upon her, as she sat by, quietly listening. On one occasion she was led round the refectory with a basket full of filth suspended from her neck, by a nun who repeated, "Sisters, look upon this wretched creature, whose mind is more full of perverse opinions than this basket is of filth." On another she was compelled to wear a paper mask, while the prayers of the sisterhood were asked for the conversion of this "hypocrite." And although we are told that she accepted these cruel outrages in silent meekness, we need not wonder that her

* Mém. pour servir, vol. i. p. 335.

very residence in the monastery was felt to be a reproach by its present rulers. "The Bishop of Langres said to me one day," she writes, "that I was a stumbling-block in his way. And when I answered him that I never spoke, he said, 'Your very shadow hinders us.' I said, 'Send me whither you choose and I will go.'" And accordingly, she abandoned Port Royal for a while, to become the first superior of the new monastery of the Holy Eucharist.*

The vain and worldly prelate had long desired the honour of founding a new monastic order, though his own vacillation of purpose, and the difficulty of procuring the necessary authorisations had delayed the execution of the project. At one time he proposed to establish a society of monks, the seclusion and austerity of whose lives should surpass all known examples of monastic severity; at another, he inclined to the scheme of a community of female devotees. The latter was the design at last selected to be carried into execution, and the characteristic feature of the new order was to be the perpetual adoration of Christ as manifest in the Holy Eucharist; a practice which the nuns of Port Royal had already adopted when the maintenance of their reform appeared to be threatened by the death of M. de Citeaux in 1625. Accordingly, in 1627, the agent who was sent to Rome to negotiate the removal of Port Royal to the jurisdiction of the ordinary, procured also a bull for the establishment of the Order of the Holy Eucharist. Still, the consent of the King and the Archbishop of Paris was necessary. That of the former was withheld till 1630, when Louis XIII., who had fallen ill at Lyons, and had been given over by his physicians, suddenly and inexplicably recovered after having received the Viaticum. How easy for any friend of the proposed order, who might happen to have access to the royal person, to interpret this recovery into a miraculous

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 335; vol. ii. p. 416.

interposition of Christ, in honour of his physical manifestation in the bread and wine! We must suppose that the opportunity was not lost; for letters-patent authorising the establishment of an order of the Holy Eucharist, and setting forth the miraculous recovery of the king, were immediately issued. Still the Archbishop of Paris contrived to delay the actual foundation of the order for three years more. He wished to be its sole superior: and the bull associated the Archbishop of Sens and the Bishop of Langres with him. He insisted that none but Angélique Arnauld should be the first abbess: and M. de Langres felt that her genuine aversion to pomp and display might hinder his schemes for making his order a means of social and political influence. At length, however, the latter was compelled to give way on both points. The nomination of Angélique in the bull was suffered to take effect, and certain privileges beyond those of his episcopal coadjutors were accorded to M. de Paris. The Duchesse de Longueville, a princess of the blood royal of France, was prevailed upon to declare herself foundress of the order, and a house for the accommodation of the sisterhood was bought in the immediate vicinity of the Louvre, from the proceeds of a legacy left by a good Madame Bardeau, who bought at the price of 30,000 livres the honour of co-operation with kings and princesses. The old simplicity of Port Royal was entirely discarded in the new foundation. No nun was to be admitted who did not bring certificates of noble birth, and a dowry of 10,000 livres. The prescribed habits were becoming in colour and fine in material. The church was to be beautiful in its architecture and decorations; the hours of service accommodated to the usages of the court. The rule of seclusion was to be strictly enforced, yet so as not to shock the prejudices of polite society. In a word, every effort was to be made to present religion and the monastic life in an agreeable light to maids of honour and ladies in waiting.

The design soon failed; less, perhaps, from its own inherent impracticability than from the intrigues and jealousies of its supporters. M. de Paris lent the infant community only a doubtful countenance, and never suffered the little band which migrated from Port Royal to be augmented by the admission of novices. But the storm which burst upon the House of the Holy Eucharist with most destructive violence had its origin in the jealousy with which the other archiepiscopal superior, M. de Sens, regarded his brother of Langres. The weapon of offence which the archbishop furbished up did more credit to his ingenuity than to his honesty or his manliness. In 1627, when the idea of a perpetual adoration of the Eucharist had first presented itself to the nuns of Port Royal, and when M. de Sens was yet a firm friend and ally of M. de Langres, Agnès Arnauld had written a manual of mystical devotion, enumerating sixteen attributes of Christ as manifested in the Eucharist, accompanied by a brief explanation of each. These attributes are the following: Sainteté, vérité, liberté, existence, sufficence, satiété, plénitude, éminence, possession, règne, inaccessibilité, incompréhensibilité, indépendance, incommunicabilité, illimitation, inapplication; and the explanations are, to the Protestant mind, little less difficult to understand than the phrases themselves. The Chapelet, as it was called, was shown by Agnès to her spiritual director, Père Condren, who, in the excess of his approving delight, communicated it to the Bishop of Langres and the Archbishop of Sens, neither of whom, and especially not the latter, was sparing of his commendation.

This product of the mystical piety of La Mère Agnès was neither printed nor published, while its very existence was unknown, except to five or six persons. But in 1633, when the friendship of M. de Sens for M. de Langres had cooled into something like secret enmity, and the former looked with envy upon the new community which the latter

had succeeded in founding, the Chapelet was resuscitated to support a charge or an insinuation of heresy. Forgetting, perhaps willingly, the hearty approval with which he had at first greeted it, the archbishop put it into the hands of the Doctors of the Sorbonne, to have its suspicious orthodoxy thoroughly tested. They returned it with a censure. Not content with this, he sent the document, now known as the Chapelet Secret—as if it had been purposely concealed—to Rome, for more authoritative condemnation, and at the same time drew the attention of theological France to the subject by the publication of a controversial tract.

The suddenness of the attack caused no small consternation among the sisterhood of the St. Sacrement. To the majority the heretical document was entirely unknown. In neither house could a copy be found; and only after long search was one discovered in the hands of Mère Marie des Anges, now Abbess of Maubuisson. Angélique turned, in her distress, to the Bishop of Langres, and to M. de St. Cyran, at that time the friend of both. The latter carefully examined the Chapelet, and declared that the only fault which his utmost theological skill could detect was some slight obscurity of phrase. The former, perceiving that the theologians of Paris were already retained by his adversary, appealed to the Doctors of Louvain, and received from the learned Fromond, and Jansen, whose orthodoxy was yet unimpeached, declarations that the writing submitted to them contained nothing contrary to the Catholic faith. A wordy war of pamphlets followed: M. de St. Cyran defended, and numerous anonymous writers attacked, the doctrines supposed to be implied in the pious mistiness of Agnès Arnauld's devotion. At last came the authoritative decision from Rome: the Chapelet was neither censured nor put in the Index Expurgatorius; but it was ordered to be suppressed, and to remain secret, as it had hitherto been, so as not to afford an occasion of offence to simple

people. And upon this the controversy, though again briefly blazing up upon fresh provocation, gradually died away.*

This was not, however, the only trouble which Angélique had to undergo in her new office. She had been placed in it against the will of M. de Langres, the fitful ardour of whose piety, strangely chequered with worldliness, had little in common with her steady self-devotion. A more congenial instrument of his purposes was Mademoiselle de Chamesson, an orphan lady of good family, whom the bishop had taken under his protection, and whom he now associated with Angélique in the government of the new community. Though very young, she was made mistress of the novices, and the abbess was strictly charged by the superior to do nothing without first consulting her. She soon became the favourite and the confidante of both the bishop and Madame de Longueville; no doubt acting as a spy upon the sisterhood, who were tenderly attached to their abbess, and soon gave evidence, at once by their piety and their mutual affection, of her wonderful powers of administration. The story of the disappointment which at last led Angélique to return to Port Royal is confused and uninteresting. The Archbishop of Paris prevented the accession to the new order of the rich and well-born novices whom it had been designed to captivate. The Bishop of Langres grew weary of an institution which corresponded so imperfectly with his original intentions. Angélique longed to escape from Mademoiselle de Chamesson to the peaceful seclusion of Port Royal. And at last, acting under the advice of St. Cyran, she proposed to the archbishop that La Mère Geneviève, who had now been Abbess of Port Royal for six years, and who was willing to acknowledge his rights as sole

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 338, 433. The "Chapelet Secret" is the subject of a special memoir by Angélique de St. Jean. Mém. pour servir., vol. i. p. 456.

superior, should take her place, while she once more entered the old community as a simple nun. The change was effected on the 10th of February, 1636, without the knowledge of M. de Langres, who, nevertheless, received the news with joy. But with Angélique had departed the only chance of establishing the new order on a firm basis; and in two years more the first and only convent of the St. Sacrement had ceased to exist.*

The traces which this unquiet period left upon the mind of Angélique were, however, deep and lasting. She had made one more effort to gain in the Bishop of Langres a spiritual director, on whom she could implicitly rely; she had submitted her conscience and reason to his with strange perseverance, and the result had been only the more bitter disappointment. Nevertheless, she had gained a friend and adviser, whose connection with Port Royal gave a direction to all its future fortunes. M. de St. Cyran, for a time the trusted ally of the Bishop of Langres, had been known to Angélique for many years. He had been struck with admiration of the self-forgetting charity of the sisters of Port Royal, exhibited in the reception of the nuns of Maubuisson, and had written a letter of thanks to Angélique, as if she had conferred a favour on himself. He had subsequently visited her at Port Royal des Champs, where the honest frankness of his conversation had formed a grateful contrast to the insipid flattery which she was often condemned to hear. "He told me," she says, "that he had known many abbesses who had reformed their monasteries, very few who had reformed themselves."† And thus, when M. de Langres presented him to the nuns of the St. Sacrement as their confessor and religious

* The history of the order of the St. Sacrement is told very minutely in various papers of the Mem. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 336, 421, 474, 507, 584; also by Besoigne, Hist. de Port Royal, vol. i. p. 158.

† Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 338, 339.

teacher, she was prepared to find in him the guide whom she had so long sought. She was not disappointed. It was he who sustained her in her attempt to maintain the conventual discipline intact, amid the many suggestions of license which proceeded from the foundress and the superior. He aided her in kindling and keeping alive the flame of rational piety in the ignorant and indifferent sisters over whom she was placed, and performed the same work for the parent community of Port Royal, by recommending to them as confessor M. Singlin, a master in the difficult art of the conduct of souls. But the nature and extent of St. Cyran's influence can be understood only when we have made some attempt to portray his whole life and character.

The history of Port Royal during the three years in which Angélique was abbess of the convent of the St. Sacrement, is almost wholly uneventful. In 1636, Agnès Arnauld, now returned from her mission to Dijon, was elected abbess, while her elder and more energetic sister willingly submitted herself to her authority. Before long all things resumed their wonted track, and the old severity of the first reform was restored, but not for a time the old unity of opinion and affection. Some of the sisterhood still regarded the virtues of M. de Langres with the highest veneration, and Madame de Pont Carré, aided by a younger sister of Angélique and Agnès, led a small but factious party in his favour. Good sense and St. Cyran soon triumphed; the bishop was requested to abstain from interference in the affairs of a monastery not within his own jurisdiction*; the claims to authority urged by Madame de Pont Carré settled by repaying her benefaction; and peace had been restored, when the arrest of St. Cyran, by order of Richelieu, once more threw all into confusion. But an

* Mém. pour servir, vol. i. pp. 365—369.

event which, like this, makes an epoch in our story, demands more minute narration than can here be accorded. Henceforward Port Royal is no longer an obscure convent of Cistercian nuns, the changes of whose fortunes are matter of concern only to its private friends or foes; but the recognised centre of a freer thought and a purer practice than are agreeable to authorities in Church and State.

BOOK II.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE JANSENIST CONTROVERSY TO THE PEACE OF THE CHURCH.

I.

THE history of Roman Catholic Christianity since the revival of letters offers to the careful student more than one type of religious revolution, and proves how a Church, which appears throughout its whole theory to disregard the rights of the individual mind, may yet direct its policy with a constant view to personal peculiarities and characteristics. In one signal instance the revolt of free thought against ecclesiastical authority led to the disruption of the Church, and the establishment of the reformed communities which still wage war with her. Not only were the tactics which the Papal See directed against the German Reformers shallow and irresolute, but the religious differences involved in the quarrel too deep and fundamental to be reconciled by any tactics whatever. But in many more instances, movements within the Church, which threatened a dangerous hostility, have encountered a more subtle and successful opposition. The Society of Jesus, which at one time seemed likely to become an *imperium in imperio*, was dexterously converted into the most efficient weapon ever wielded by the Church, while the new orders, and fresh modifications of old orders, which even yet continue to rise, and for a time to flourish, conclusively prove that the Church of Rome knows how to enlist into her army of saints and heroes the men of whom other churches make their sectaries and fanatics. Sometimes an incipient heresy, a nascent Protestantism, arises within her borders, and if, as is generally the case, it attacks no doctrine dear to the common mass of believers, but aims only at a freer thought

and a purer life, it is remorselessly crushed like the Jansenism of St. Cyran and Port Royal. Sometimes a new dogma takes possession of the popular imagination: struggles perhaps for acceptance through more centuries than one: is denied meanwhile by all who own any aspirations after the purity of the faith, and neither affirmed nor denied by the possessors of infallibility; who at last perceive in it a means of adding to the claims of the Church, and pronounce it a canonical development of immemorial articles of faith. To such a consummation has arrived in our own day, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The mode of faith, known in the history of the Church as Jansenism, which St. Cyran, the friend of Jansen, inculcated upon the nuns and recluses of Port Royal, deals too much with the profoundest mysteries of theology and human nature to be briefly characterised. Before we attempt to select and depict its leading features, it is better that we should learn to know it, as it actually manifested itself in the controversies and triumphs of Port Royal. But it is easy to detect at first sight, the obvious affinities with Protestantism, which convinced the Jesuits, those most jealous guardians of Catholic purity of faith, that it was a tendency of thought to be extirpated by any means and at any cost. And yet a thousand facts of the story which I have to tell, will prove that these affinities were entirely unknown to those in whom they existed: St. Cyran, the first apostle of Jansenism in France, never opened a Protestant book without exorcising the demon, whose residence within accounted for the fatal persuasiveness of the arguments, and was engaged, when death overtook him, in writing a treatise which should utterly confound and overthrow the Calvinists.* Nevertheless, the very origin of

* Lancelot. Mémoires touchant la Vie de M. de St. Cyran, vol. i. pp. 98, 226.

Jansenism was a rebellion against the theological authority of the schoolmen, and an attempt to draw a less troubled water of life from the pages of Augustine: it was but one step farther — we may note — to the Protestant appeal to the Bible itself. The Jansenists too, while submitting themselves always to the Papal infallibility in matters of faith, were the steadfast opponents of those Ultramontane doctrines, which were inconsistent with the famous "liberties of the Gallican Church:" — was there not here some tendency towards a perilous advocacy of ecclesiastical freedom? But after all, the main crime, one never to be overlooked or pardoned, was that the Jansenists took the Protestant side in the great controversy of nature and of grace. When all that is temporary and accidental is stripped from the motives which produced the Protestant Reformation, it remains, in its essence, a rebellion against the doctrine of justification by works. Necessity and free will: faith and works: grace and merit: election and free redemption: such have been the watchwords of a debate which agitated the Church even in apostolic days, nor has yet ceased to rage. Augustine and Pelagius in the fifth century are, in regard to this controversy, the types of Jansenist and Jesuit in the seventeenth. And however both parties might strive to express their doctrines in the phrases of recognised formularies: however they might succeed in deepening the natural obscurity of the question by a cloud of subtle metaphysics: however sincerely they might appeal for confirmation or condemnation of their views to the great central authority, it still remains a fact that the Jansenist theologians of Port Royal inclined rather to the Protestant than to the Catholic side of this weighty controversy.

Jean du Vergier de Hauranne, better known by the title derived from his abbey of St. Cyran, was born at Bayonne, in 1581, of a noble family, or, according to his detractors, of one which had made itself considerable by trade. The

foundations of his learning were laid in his native place: whence in due time he proceeded to Paris to study theology in the Sorbonne. His stay here was but brief: for by the advice of the Bishop of Bayonne, he exchanged his first Alma Mater for the University of Louvain, already famous for the controversy of Baius and Lessius in regard to grace. Here De Hauranne passed four years in close application to study; and at the end of his course defended, as the custom was, a thesis in Scholastic Theology, which won for him the warm commendation of no less renowned a scholar than Lipsius, who, in a letter still extant, predicts a brilliant future for the young and ardent student.*

From Louvain De Hauranne returned to Paris, where, although we have no certain knowledge of his manner of life, it is allowed us to conjecture that he pursued his studies with unintermitted zeal. His first work, which dates from this period, though apparently quite unconnected with his future thoughts and labours, is yet sufficiently singular in its title and subject to deserve a passing notice in this place. It is called "The Royal Question; wherein it is shown in what extremity, principally in time of peace, a subject might be obliged to preserve the life of his Prince at the expense of his own†:" and was published in 1609. Henri IV., it is said, gaily referring one day to his old perils, put the case to certain of his courtiers, what they would have done, if, after the battle of Arques, he and they had been compelled to take refuge on the sea, and had found themselves, far from land, at the mercy of the waves, and absolutely without provisions. One, prompt to parade an easy loyalty, replied, that rather than suffer his sovereign to die of hunger, he would have killed himself to supply

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 236.

† "Question Royale: où est montré en quelle extrémité, principalement en temps de paix, le sujet pourroit être obligé de conserver la vie du prince aux dépens de la sienne."

the royal needs. Then arose the nice question for casuists, Was suicide, committed under such circumstances, justifiable? The Compte de Cramail repeated the case of conscience devised by the royal ingenuity to M. de Hauranne, who, fresh from schools, where such difficulties formed a recognised part of the moral and logical training, addressed himself to the singular problem with eager ingenuity, and produced the treatise above mentioned, in which are enumerated thirty-four cases of justifiable suicide. In subsequent years, when the searching irony of Pascal had poured unwelcome day upon the mysteries of Jesuit casuistry, the enemies of Port Royal disinterred, with joyful malignity, this logical jeu d'esprit of the founder of the hated school of theologians. Yet, if the work were now accessible, it might possibly be difficult to draw the line between the ingenious suppositions of the logician and the serious conclusions of a mind naturally addicted to paradox. For again in 1617, M. de Hauranne amused the theological world of France by his "Apology for Henri Louis Chateignier de la Rochepozai, Bishop of Poitiers, against those who say that it is not permitted to Ecclesiastics to have recourse to arms in case of necessity."* M. de Poitiers, the friend and patron of our yet eccentric theologian, had vigorously wielded the secular arm against the Protestants, and himself headed a charge of cavalry against them in the streets of his own episcopal city. The book cites a portentous list of prelates who had shown themselves men of valour, and of course goes back for precedents as far as Samuel and Abraham, not forgetting the Maccabees by the way. †

It is uncertain whether the friendship between M. de Hauranne and Cornelius Jansen, so fruitful in consequences

* "Apologie pour Henri Louis Chateignier de la Rochepozai, Évêque de Poitiers, contre ceux qui disent qu'il n'est pas permis aux Ecclésiastiques d'avoir recours aux armes en cas de nécessité."

† Besoigne, vol. iii. pp. 343, 350. St^e. Beuve, vol. i. p. 290.

to themselves and the Church, was commenced at Louvain or in Paris. We do know, however, that Jansen visited the latter city about 1605, when an intimate acquaintance between the former fellow-students was either formed or renewed.* This great, and for the most part unconscious heresiarch, since his main work was only posthumously published, was born in 1585, at Accoy, a village near Leerdam, in Holland. His parents were peasants of a grade of society so humble as not to be distinguished by a surname. His father was Jan Ottosen, John the son of Otto; and he, in his turn, was known as Cornelius, son of Jan. Long after his death the Jesuits pretended to discover that his family had once adopted the reformed religion, and insinuated that their great enemy was himself no better than a Calvinist in disguise. But none of the few facts which have been preserved in relation to Jansen's origin and early life, lend any countenance to this hypothesis. At the age of seventeen he was sent to the Catholic University of Louvain, where he studied with such assiduity and success as to be publicly declared the first student of his year. His industry appears, however, to have overtasked his bodily strength; for, at the conclusion of his course, he was recommended to proceed, for the benefit of his health, to Paris, where, for the first time, we hear of him in connection with St. Cyran.†

An ardent friendship soon sprang up between two men of tempers so congenial, occupied with the same studies. Their worldly circumstances were indeed dissimilar; but the social position of St. Cyran was soon used to obtain for his friend a tutorship in a wealthy family, which supplied the necessary means for his continued sojourn in Paris. Theology, in the various forms in which the school-

* An ingenious anagram of Cornelius Jansenius, which bears internal marks of Jesuit authorship, is "Calvini sensus in ore."

† Lancelot, vol. i. p. 101.

men presented that science, was the object of their readings and discussions; but after a time the eager students, failing to slake their thirst at these stagnant and shallow pools, resolved to emancipate themselves from the usual routine of instruction, and to seek, after their own fashion, a well of purer waters. And in the year 1611 they left the capital, and established themselves in scholastic seclusion at Champré, a house by the sea-side near Bayonne, with the avowed purpose of wholly devoting themselves to the study of St. Augustine. They had found that the schoolmen bowed reverently to the authority of the bishop of Hippo, as a mightier doctor than themselves, and in the true spirit of scientific research they hastened to what seemed to them the fountain-head of knowledge. And however the Protestant theologian may regret that they did not pursue this principle to its legitimate results, and make the Scriptures themselves the object of systematic study, it is impossible not to confess that there is something almost sublime in the aspiration after religious truth which induced these friends, in the first flower of their strength and reputation, to leave the market where talent might buy preferment, and to meditate for five long years upon the mystic pages of the great Latin Father. Their assiduity in study was of no common order. Lancelot, the pupil, whose grateful pen has perpetuated the virtues of St. Cyran, tells us that he had seen a chair with a reading desk attached, in which Jansen was said to have passed days and nights, snatching only a brief sleep in the intervals of study. A game at shuttlecock alternated, we are told, with a chapter of Augustine, and the skill of the friends was as conspicuously displayed in wielding the battledore as in interpreting a knotty passage on Grace and Election. And Madame de Hauranne often remonstrated with her son, who was the robuster of the two, and warned him, that if he did not take heed, he would kill the good Fleming with

over study. Even here, however, their merits did not escape recognition. The Bishop of Bayonne gave De Hauranne a canonry in his cathedral, and appointed Jansen principal of a projected college; but the elevation of the prelate, in 1616, to the archbishopric of Tours, interposed an obstacle to the execution of these plans. Jansen returned to Louvain, where we find him in May 1617. De Hauranne betook himself to Poitiers, and in 1620, received from the bishop of that city the abbey of St. Cyran, on the borders of Berri and Touraine, the only church preferment which he ever desired or accepted.*

It was at Poitiers, in the month of August, 1620, that M. d'Andilly, the elder brother of Angélique and Agnès Arnauld, first saw St. Cyran. Each of them had long been known to the Bishop of Aire, who now, in making them known to each other, declared to D'Andilly that he gave him, in this new friend, a treasure beyond price. "He then went out," says D'Andilly, "and left us alone: and these few words being sufficient to unite us, our friendship began from that moment; and up to the time of M. de St. Cyran's death, continued to be as complete as it is possible in this world for friendship to be."† In another place he speaks of "M. de St. Cyran, who was my other self."‡ And that this friendship was recognised by others as the perfect amity it was, the following anecdote may testify. When St. Cyran died, in 1643, Madame de Gueméné besought the Queen Mother, Anne of Austria, to give his preferment to his nephew, M. de Barcos. The request was granted, with the words, "What would M. d'Andilly say if I refused this favour to the nephew of one whom he loved so much?" Upon hearing of this, D'Andilly thought it necessary to go to the Palais Royal, to thank the Queen in

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 102, 103. † Mém. d'Andilly, p. 434.
‡ Ibid., p. 447.

person. "Then you loved M. de St. Cyran?" she said. "I was under such obligations to him, madame," answered D'Andilly, "that I loved him more than life; and more than this, he has bequeathed to me his heart, and *that* I esteem a greater thing" .... Upon which the Queen interrupted him, and pointing to the young Louis XIV., whom she held by the hand, finished the sentence,—"a greater thing than to be *that*."*

The electric chain, which was destined to connect the Augustinian theology with the reformed sisterhood of Port Royal was now complete.† The ideas which had been sown in the minds of St. Cyran and Jansen during their studious retreat at Bayonne, began to germinate under the influence of a frequent and intimate correspondence, while the new views of truth and duty, in proportion as they assumed their full magnitude and true relations in the minds of the friends, were transmitted to D'Andilly, who was so closely connected with both the active and the monastic life of Paris. In some aspects this conjunction of the student, the ecclesiastic, and the courtier is singular enough. Jansen, in his professor's chair at Louvain, was engaged in the entirely abstract and critical task of extracting the essence of pure doctrine from the pages of Augustine; St. Cyran, directing chosen consciences and anonymously mingling in weighty controversies from his almost monastic abode in the heart of Paris, was collecting a small band of disciples, apt to receive and defend the new truths; while the office which D'Andilly filled was that of mediator between his friends and a court which cared for none of

* Mém. d'Andilly, p. 466.

† Tallemant des Reaux (Historiettes, vol. iv. p. 71) quotes a genealogy of Jansenius, drawn up by the Jesuits, which, in its beginnings at least, is sufficiently honourable. "Paulus genuit Augustinum; Augustinus Calvinum; Calvinus Jansenium; Jansenius Sancyranum; Sancyranus Arnaldum et fratres ejus."

these things, and hated reform in the Church only less than innovation in the State.

When the union of thought and desire, which lies at the foundation of a friendship like this, issues in union of purpose and action, and a new direction is given to the current of religious conviction, nothing is more common than for enemies or vulgar critics to suspect the existence of a plot or secret scheme for the attainment of unworthy ends. And thus, about the year 1655, started into life the story of the conspiracy of Bourg Fontaine. In 1621, about the end of summer (so at least a repentant witness of the scene asserted to the Jesuit author of the tale), six or seven persons assembled at Bourg Fontaine, in the forest of Villers Cotterets, for the purpose of planning a religious revolution. The objects of the conspiracy — objects for which the pious sisters of Port Royal laboured and suffered,—"were to destroy belief in the mystery of the Incarnation; to reduce the Gospel to the level of an apocryphal history; to exterminate the Christian religion, and to elevate Deism upon its ruins."* Even thirty years after the alleged cabal was formed, the scruples or fears of the informer decided him to designate the principal members of it only by the initials of their names; and the joy of the Jansenists was not small when their enemies committed the absurd blunder of interpreting A. A. by Antoine Arnauld, who was, in 1621, a boy of only nine years of age. Still such a mistake as this by no means proves that the story, however distorted by party malignity, had no foundation in fact. A. A. may as well stand for Arnauld d'Andilly as for Antoine Arnauld, and the fact of an interview between Jansen and St. Cyran, in 1621, at Bourg Fontaine, is not rendered impossible by any historical considerations. There is, indeed, much in the corre-

* Pascal. Provinciales, Lettre xvi. p. 308.

spondence of the friends which shows that definite schemes for the exercise of theological influence were not absent from their minds. The "Augustinus," the famous work to which Jansen devoted his life, appears to have been planned with the assistance of St. Cyran, who was kept accurately informed of its progress. Nor was its author unaware that the views of Christian doctrine which it set forth were likely to excite the fiercest opposition among orthodox theologians. In a letter, dated March 5th, 1621, he writes,—"I dare not confess to any one what I think, in accordance with the principles of St. Augustine, of many of the theological opinions of this age, especially of those in regard to grace and predestination, for fear lest at Rome they should treat me as they have done others, before the whole matter arrives at maturity. . . . These studies have entirely destroyed the ambition which might have led me to desire a professor's chair in the university; for I see clearly that I must either hold my peace or incur much danger by speaking, my conscience not permitting me to betray what I know to be the truth. But God can change the course of events whenever He thinks fit."*

In the lives of the two friends, also, it is not difficult to trace a similarity of purpose, not to say a community of design. Jansen, on his return to Louvain, in 1617, was appointed principal of a newly-founded college, where he led a quiet academic life, till, in 1638, he obtained the professorship of theology in the university. It is true that to some extent he appears to have united the qualities of the diplomatist and man of affairs with those of the student; for on two occasions, in 1624, and again in 1626, the university sent him to Madrid, to take charge of some delicate negotiations with the Spanish court. And again, when war was declared against France, in 1635, he pub-

* Ste. Beuve, vol. i. p. 307.

lished, under the title of "Mars Gallicus," a vehement attack upon the policy of Cardinal Richelieu, especially in uniting the interests of the Most Christian King with those of Protestant allies, a work which not improbably earned for him the bishopric of Ypres, to which he was elevated soon after its publication. Still, in spite of these interruptions, his life was wholly academic. His less known theological works, expositions of the Pentateuch and of the Four Gospels, consist of his professorial lectures. In preparation for his "Augustinus," he had read through, he tells us, the whole of Augustine's voluminous works ten several times, and the treatises against the Pelagians not less than thirty times. Had he been cast upon a desert island, he thought he could have passed his life happily in the sole company of his favourite author; and wished that he could follow, like the cranes, in the sun's track, and pursue his reading where the days were longest.* St. Cyran, on the contrary, endeavoured to do his part towards the reform in life and doctrine in quite another way. His reputation for erudition was not less than that of Jansen: Richelieu is said once to have pointed him out to a brilliant throng of courtiers, as "the most learned man in Europe." His writings also were not without effect upon the controversies of his age, though now entirely forgotten. His was the force of character. He lived somewhat obscurely in Paris, a simple abbé, steadfastly rejecting all offers of preferment, and yet wielding so strong a secret influence, that even Richelieu began to suspect and fear him. They had known one another of old, when St. Cyran had lived with the Bishop of Poitiers, and the great Cardinal had held the neighbouring see of Luçon. And from Richelieu, who knew the value of the man, and desired to attract him to his service, or at least to bribe him into

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 103, 104. St^e. Beuve, vol. i. p. 307.

neutrality, offers of preferment were not wanting. The first appointment proffered was that of almoner to the Princess Henrietta Maria, about to proceed to England as the wife of Charles I.; but St. Cyran declined the honourable banishment. Five several offers of bishoprics—eight, if we may trust the affectionate record of Lancelot,—encountered the same reply; till at last Richelieu, not unjustifiably, began to think that the plans and hopes of one who despised such honours must be vast and dangerous indeed. Meanwhile, St. Cyran was slowly and secretly ascending the only eminence which he coveted. Much of what was noblest in church and state began to gather round him, and to look up to him. He was the intimate friend of Berulle, the first general of the Congregation of the Oratory in France; he was the efficient helper of Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Sisterhood of Mercy. And he enjoyed the dangerous honour of having already drawn upon himself the implacable hostility of the Society of Jesus.*

The origin of this hatred is to be sought in two controversies, in each of which the Jesuits had found themselves face to face with a doughty anonymous opponent, whom the universal opinion of the Gallican Church identified with St. Cyran. One Père Garasse, whom Bayle facetiously calls "the Helen of the Jesuit and Jansenist war," published, in 1626, a weighty folio, with the portentous title, "La Somme Théologique des Vérités Capitales de la Religion Chrétienne." An extract from his preface may give some idea of the way in which this jocose theologian addressed himself to the fundamental truths of Christianity:—"The birth of my book in some sort resembles that of the Emperor Commodus: some desire it, some fear it, and some look upon it as a very unimportant matter." And

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 58, 59. Besoigne, vol. iii. p. 379.

again, in another place: "As to my manner of writing, I shall only say one word,—I try to write concisely, and, as far as may be, with no metaphorical disguise. I know that it is not easy to do so, for I think that metaphors, like women, are necessary evils." When to a style like this were added perversions of Scripture, misquotations of the Fathers, erroneous statements of Catholic dogma, it appeared necessary to St. Cyran, if only for the honour of French theology, to expose so ignorant a pretender. Accordingly, in 1626, a work bearing the feigned name of Alexander de l'Exclusse, and dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu, issued from the Parisian press, under the title "La Somme des Fautes et Faussetés capitales contenues en la Somme Théologique du Père François Garasse." The refutation was complete, but not on that account more acceptable to the Society. They made many vain efforts to prevent the publication of St. Cyran's book, and laid up the indignity in their hearts, when theological France greeted its appearance with a shout of scorn and laughter against the unlucky Garasse, and the Sorbonne ratified by its formal censure the verdict of public opinion. Yet the after history of the vanquished controversialist is at least a proof that Christian heroism does not always disdain the companionship even of theological conceit. The Society thought it expedient to station Garasse in the comparative obscurity of Poitiers, where he voluntarily undertook the care of the patients in a plague hospital, and bravely encountered the almost certain death which he had gone half way to meet.*

The second controversy in which St. Cyran and the Jesuits ranged themselves on opposite sides, was not only more important in itself, but has a peculiar interest for English readers. In 1625, a few weeks before the death of James I., Pope Urban VIII., rightly concluding from the arbitrary

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 73. St^e. Beuve, vol. i. p. 324.

temper of the Stuarts, and Prince Charles' projected alliances with the Catholic royal families of Spain and France, that the time was come for the Church to reassert some of her ancient claims to English allegiance, consecrated one Richard Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon *in partibus*, ordinary and vicar-general of the whole island. We soon after find him, according to Fuller*, "appearing in his *pontificalibus* in Lancashire, with his mitre and crosier, to the wonder of poor people, and conferring orders and the like." A proclamation was, however, soon issued, offering a reward of 100*l.* for his apprehension, and the aggressive bishop found it expedient to take refuge in France. But not till his presence in England had given occasion to a violent controversy among his co-religionists. The Reformation had in its course swept away the episcopal organisation of the Catholic Church, which has only been restored in our own day; and England was a country in which the emissaries of Rome needed all the self-devotion and independent fertility of resource, characteristic of the successful missionary. And the members of the various monastic orders, the regular clergy as they were called, and especially the Society of Jesus, had claimed and occupied this sphere of operation. They were not, therefore, now prepared to submit themselves to episcopal control, which at once abridged their ecclesiastical privileges and functions, and drew to itself a proportion of the contributions of the faithful. The result was an attack both upon the bishop himself, and the validity of his appointment. He appealed to the assembly of French clergy to support his pretensions, and in virtue of some old official connection with Richelieu, was able to enlist on his side the good offices of the all-powerful Cardinal.

Episcopal rights were a subject of peculiar interest to the

* Fuller, Church History of Britain (ed. Nichols), vol. iii. p. 357.

French clergy; for a bishop in France claimed a kind of modified independence of the Pope, which formed no unimportant item in the often-contested liberties of the Gallican Church. And just at this juncture, a combatant, who took the name of Petrus Aurelius, and who wrote in Latin, stepped into the arena, and in four or five short treatises, vigorously defended the claims of the Bishop of Chalcedon, and episcopal privileges in general. Never was theological victory more complete. Each successive blow against the Jesuits was greeted with delighted applause. The Roman Catholic Church in England addressed to the unknown Aurelius a warm letter of thanks. The clergy of France, in their assembly of 1635, repaid to the printer the cost of the various publications, and appointed a committee to discover and bring to light the anonymous benefactor of the Church. The assembly of 1641 ordered the publication, at its own expense, of a second edition, which was issued in the following year, with a title-page adorned with allegorical designs and appropriate mottos. It is unnecessary to pursue further the history of this once-celebrated book. For some years it was alternately reprinted and repudiated by successive assemblies, and at last dropped quietly into the forgetfulness which awaits all purely controversial literature.*

Though St. Cyran reaped, both for himself and his friends, the abundant harvest of hatred, which the Jesuits sowed for the unknown Petrus Aurelius, he could never be induced to admit his identity with that renowned controversialist. Sometimes he replied to the inquiries of his friends on this head by a direct negative; sometimes he contented himself with a dexterous evasion. M. de Barcos, his nephew and intimate friend, denied his uncle's authorship

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 83. Besoigne, vol. iii. p. 359, *et seq.* St^e. Beuve, vol. i. pp. 327—332.

of these celebrated pamphlets, both orally and in his writings. At the same time it must be confessed that there is a reserve, a want of explicitness in these denials, which still leaves room for the belief that the conjecture of all theological France was not without foundation. We are told, for instance, that on one occasion, when M. Arnauld, the Princesse de Gueméné, and some other persons of distinction, were pressing M. de St. Cyran to declare himself the author, he said, as if unable to rid himself of their importunity in any other way, "Well, we must call my nephew, and hear his opinion upon it." M. de Barcos was accordingly sent for, and having learned what had passed, said laughingly, "*You*, Sir, *you* declare yourself the author? But what if, after that, the real Aurelius were to appear?" Upon which St. Cyran turned to his friends, with, "You hear what my nephew says—we cannot go further than that."* The result was, we are told, to confirm the opinion, which probably accords most with facts, that the nephew was so far concerned in the actual writing of the work, as to justify the uncle in his formal denial. And the whole transaction is in harmony with the peculiar reserve which characterised St. Cyran. "If Aurelius," says Lancelot, "has, in the face of God, hidden himself in such a manner as to remain unknown to all the world up to the present hour, M. de St. Cyran also had no more inviolable rule than this of secrecy in his works. So that he sometimes said that the only means of drawing down a blessing upon books, was to communicate more with God than with men, by writing more in imitation of the authors of the sacred volume, and often watering them with silent prayer."† He had reached what appears to have been a true abnegation of self in this respect. If any work for God were

* Lancelot, vol. ii. p. 165.

† Lancelot, vol. i. p. 265. Conf. vol. i. p. 181.

well done, it was the Divine grace which had effectually co-operated to its performance, and the human instrument was nothing, and less than nothing. A sincere conviction that in this denial of self was a perennial fountain of moral strength, may probably account for his repeated refusals of preferment. He lived a hermit's life in the very heart of Paris. It was not easy to gain admittance to his society, harder still to win his confidence. Yet all the while, by two engines of influence, education and confession, he was preparing a school of followers, who revered him as a father, and looked upon his memory as that of a saint and a martyr. He had undertaken the education of his nephews from a very early age; and M. de Barcos and another had been pupils of Jansen at Louvain. He was also accustomed to select such children of his friends as he hoped might not disappoint his expectations, and either send them to his abbey of St. Cyran to be treated according to his peculiar views; or to employ in the task of tuition, under his own eye, such of his disciples as he judged most qualified by nature for it. This, as we shall hereafter see, was the origin of the celebrated schools of Port Royal.

But it was as a director of consciences that St. Cyran most displayed his wonderful powers of impressing and influencing men. He profoundly appreciated that great Scriptural truth expressed in the parable of the leaven, that society is to be regenerated in the individual, and at once saw how advantageous a position for the performance of this work is occupied by the Roman Catholic confessor. This converting of souls, one by one, might perhaps be but a slow process, but it was still the only process by which God's kingdom could be effectually helped; and the flame of Christian love and zeal, once lighted in a noble breast, would leap kindling from heart to heart. In St. Cyran we see the good side of the practice of confession; for his relation to his penitents is that of the strong will,

the steady judgment, the devout soul, towards weak, inconstant minds, alternating often between carelessness, and fanaticism. While, above all, his stern conscientiousness is always conspicuous. No famous name among the French divines stands so free as his from all suspicion of cowardly accommodation to the feelings of the great. Perhaps he knew that the episcopal palace of Bayonne might expose him to temptations which would not approach his humble lodging opposite the gate of the Chartreux. Not so wisely chose Francis de Sales, Bossuet, Fénélon, Massillon.

We are not without particulars of St. Cyran's method in the conduct of souls, in one or two instances, which may serve to exhibit the moderation and practical good sense which he brought to this very delicate task. La Sœur Marie Claire de Jésus Christ was the fifth surviving child of Antoine Arnauld and Catherine Marion. She had been brought up from an early age under the superintendence of La Mère Angélique, had taken the veil at Port Royal, and, while still very young, had occupied the difficult post of mistress of the novices at Maubuisson. At a later period she had been among the most devoted admirers of M. de Langres, and, while the attempt to found the Order of the St. Sacrement ran its brief course in Paris, had been one of the colony from Port Royal who were under his immediate control at the abbey of Tard. And so great was his influence over her, that, even after his connection with Port Royal had finally ceased, she joined the petty clique in his favour, headed by Madame de Pontcarré, and exhibited, for the first time since the Journée du Guichet, the spectacle of the Arnauld family divided against itself. La Mère Agnès, then abbess, took, at last, the decisive course of requesting M. de Langres to discontinue his visits, and, at the same time, of forbidding any of the community to correspond with him. Then, but only after a considerable interval, the natural influence

of her sisters, and of M. d'Andilly, began to assert itself over the mind of Sœur Marie Claire, and she consented once more to accommodate herself to the rigid simplicity of the reformed monastery, and to place herself in the hands of the new director, M. de St. Cyran. She wrote to him a letter, full of penitence, in which she besought his advice and guidance. He came, but not till six months had passed away, anxious, perhaps, that the new impressions and intentions might be firmly fixed in her mind before he appeared to give them a definite form and direction. One day (I quote from the notes of his conversation made by the penitent herself)* he accosted her somewhat roughly as follows:—"I neither wished nor intended to see you. I came with another thought, but when I had been in the church, I found myself compelled to ask for you. You are under no obligation except to God. 'Tis the day of St. Ignatius the Martyr: he was a remarkable saint. Well, what do you want? I am here to heal you: show your wounds."

After some conversation as to her state of mind, he said:—"You must examine yourself before God, whether you have really been that which you have made yourself appear. Sometimes extravagance hurries the mind to say what it does not believe, and to pursue what it does not approve. We must make this distinction." . . . . "It is needful that external acts of repentance should flow from an inward sentiment, and that one should correspond with the other. For one must take care not to testify outwardly more of the feeling than really exists within." Again—"Beware of exaggeration; there is most humility in a simple confession. One need not examine oneself to remember important sins: their impression is not effaced, for it belongs to the very immortality of the soul. Present your-

* Mém. pour servir, vol. iii. p. 450 *et seq.*

self before God without either thoughts or words: He will understand you well enough."

How full of practical wisdom is the following: — "It is a great mistake to conduct all souls in the same way: every soul ought to have rules for itself. Many things may be safely done by innocent souls, which would be dangerous to such as have been wounded by sin, and although healed by repentance, are not exempt from weaknesses which their sins have left behind. A soldier, who has been severely wounded, though his wounds may have been thoroughly healed, feels changes of weather for the rest of his life: and, if he prize his health, does not expose himself to fog and snow, as another might do with impunity. I cannot, therefore, leave you full liberty of conscience. . . . . The way is narrow — it is deceit to make it wide. In short, the first rule of peace is, that he who has sinned in doing unlawful things, should abstain even from lawful ones."

Many single sentences and axioms are worthy of being detached from their places in this sagacious exhortation:— "We must come living to penitence. This is the reason why I made you wait so long. I have let you live: for five months now, you have lived a spiritual life." . . . . . "I do not want the grief which shows itself in the senses: beware of your tears. I want neither looks, nor sighs, nor gestures: but a silence of spirit which forbids all movement. Pray to God: and be God's without affectation."

She had begged to be allowed to testify her humility, by assuming the habit and labours of a lay sister: he says: — "We will make you a lay sister, this Lent. . . . . You will have work to do, but not too much, that you may be able to persevere. It is contrary to humility to wish to do extraordinary things. We are not saints, merely for doing as saints do. We must keep ourselves in a humble mediocrity, and live in a certain disguise, which suffers only what is commonplace to appear in us. You must

render yourself the equal of the lay sisters in all things: only you must try to be the humblest of them all."

On a subsequent occasion, he said, to support her under an affliction which is often felt by the penitent: — "We must forget the past. If it was necessary to think of our old sins, none of us could be happy. I am noways content with a hope which is effectual only to hinder despair: we need a firm and constant hope in God, who is as infinitely gracious to souls which are in the true way, as He is infinitely severe and terrible to those which follow the false. He who has commanded us not to look back, when we have put our hands to the plough, does as He would have us do: He does not regard the past sins of a soul which seeks His kingdom."

And once more, the following passage seems to me to rise to a sublime height of Christian wisdom and eloquence: —"You wish me to give you an assurance of your safety (*que je vous assure votre condition*). I do not like this request. Souls which are truly God's ought to have neither assurance nor foresight: they ought to act by faith, which has neither clear sight nor assurance of the consequences of good works. They look to God, and follow Him every moment, depending upon the circumstances which His providence calls into being. I would not willingly know what I shall do when I leave this place. We are commanded to ask God for daily bread, — that is, His grace — only every day: but I should wish to ask Him for it every hour. A Christian soul needs an unparalleled and universal flexibility. It ought to know how to pass from rest to labour, from labour to rest: from prayer to action, from action to prayer: loving nothing, cleaving to nothing: able to do everything, and able also to do nothing when sickness or obedience stays it — remaining useless with peace and joy. For there is an advantage also, in cessation from

work; and often enough, while we are working, we are in God's sight, doing nothing."*

A word or two as to the connection of St. Cyran with the Princesse de Gueméné, may serve to show how clear-sighted and uncompromising he could be in his relations to the great. This lady was the widow of Louis de Rohan, Prince de Gueméné, famous in the scandalous chronicles of the time as among the most fascinating and complaisant of her sex. The unhappy Duc de Montmorençi, who was beheaded at Toulouse, in 1632, had been her lover, and Richelieu, who hated her, for having, as he thought, thwarted his designs upon Anne of Austria, did his best to procure the publication of her letters which were taken with the Duke. It may have been the recollection of Montmorençi, or the consciousness of the Cardinal's hatred, which in 1639, added such weight to the pious exhortations of her platonic lover, D'Andilly, that she began to visit Port Royal: to hold long conferences with the nuns: to ask their advice: at last to apply to them for a confessor: and to announce her intention of retiring from the great world. St. Cyran had been already carried off to Vincennes, but he was persuaded to correspond with the Princess, who was put under the immediate direction of Singlin.† It is needless to tell how the accomplished female courtier deluded the simple nuns with the story of a conversion which was, perhaps, never more than half unreal: how the acuter Angélique writes to and of her in a spirit of charity, which expects little while it hopes all things: how for many years the excitements of devotion and of dissipation alternately carry off the victory, and the fickle lady is gay at the court, or doleful at Port Royal: till the

* Mém. pour servir. vol. iii. part iii. rel. v.

† Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 324—327. St^e. Beuve, vol. i. p. 372.

sad end of her youngest son, beheaded for high treason in 1674, tames her wild spirit at last, and she dies a worn out, broken-hearted woman. But it is instructive to mark the attitude assumed towards her from the very first by her confessors. Singlin writes to Lancelot, not without a touch of irony, that, "if she continued in her then disposition, it would be the greatest miracle of grace that had appeared in the Church for a long time."* St. Cyran from his prison warns La Mère Angélique, that the Princess's "high birth and vast wealth would prove, according to the Gospel, great hindrances to her perfect conversion," and adds expressively, "All that I can say to you is, that what she tells you of her present disposition, which comes doubtless from the grace of God, is in her soul like a spark of fire, which has been lighted upon an icy pavement, and is blown upon by all the winds of heaven."† And this terrible figure is justified by a curious passage which was published in the "Memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz," long after both confessors had been taken to their rest. "Just a fortnight before this adventure," says the profligate churchman, "the devil had appeared to Madame La Princesse de Gueméné, called up by the conjuration of M. d'Andilly, to frighten his penitent, with whom he was more in love than I, but always in God, and quite spiritually. I, on my part, called up a demon who appeared to her in a much milder and more agreeable form, and at the end of six weeks, drew her out of Port Royal: whither, however, she made from time to time what ought to be called escapades rather than retreats."‡

A singular illustration, truly, of the ubiquity of the Church: St. Cyran conducting his penitent from his cell

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 327.

† Ste. Beuve, vol. i. p. 375.

‡ Mém. du Cardinal de Retz (Michaud et Poujoulat, vol. i.), p. 21.

at Vincennes; and De Retz gaining admittance by the back stairs, to aid the good work in another way!

The influence of St. Cyran was thus quietly extending itself in ever-widening circles, when in 1637, the eyes of all Paris were suddenly directed towards him and the monastery of Port Royal, by an event which proved to be a more than nine days' wonder. This was the conversion of Antoine le Maitre.

I have already related how Angélique Arnauld bewailed at first the hard fate which consigned her to the cloister, while her elder sister Catherine was introduced by the gate of marriage to the pleasures of the world. Before long, however, Catherine le Maître had better cause to envy the peaceful monotony of Port Royal. Her husband, Isaac le Maître, who, careful to observe the outward decencies of society, secretly rendered her life miserable by his infidelities and ill treatment. For seven years she suffered in silence, when, at last, a dangerous illness induced her to open her heart to her mother. M. Arnauld instantly appealed to the law to protect his daughter; notwithstanding the husband's caution, procured conclusive evidence of his vices; wrung out of him, in open court, a profession of Protestantism; and, in short, prosecuted the matter with such vigour, as in the course of ten days to obtain seven successive decrees, which finally empowered him to assume the guardianship of Madame le Maître and her five sons. Till the death of her father, Madame le Maître remained in his house; then, after a time, she retired to Port Royal de Paris, whence she was able to overlook the education of her boys; took a vow of perpetual chastity at the hands of Francis de Sales, and waited only for her husband's death to assume the veil with her sisters.*

* Mém. pour servir. vol. iii. p. 317 *et seq.*

The eldest of her children, Antoine le Maître, was educated for the bar, and soon promised to rival, if not to surpass, the fame of his grandfather Arnauld and great-grandfather Marion. His career was, from the beginning, a continued triumph. The courts were crowded when it was known that he was to plead. The celebrated preachers of the metropolis put off their services that they might hear him, and themselves be spared the mortification of preaching to empty benches. At the age of twenty-eight, he had already been appointed Conseiller d'Etat, with a pension, and not long after refused the post of Avocat-Général to the Parliament of Metz. About the same time, Seguier, Chancellor of France, took him under his special protection, and, on entering upon his office, chose him to make the formal harangues which introduced the highest legal dignitary of the kingdom to the Courts and Parliament of Paris. A friend, whose name is not preserved, went so far as to declare to his brother De Saçi, that the applause bestowed upon Le Maître was preferable even to the glory of the great cardinal, for it was the evident reward of merit, and not, like the latter, the subject of hatred and envy. And yet when we read these celebrated speeches, which the author revised and published long afterwards, they only furnish a fresh illustration of the fact that, in eloquence at least, merit is not always to be measured by popular applause. In the next century, Voltaire says of him, with the true Voltairean sneer*,—"He was an advocate, and considered to be very eloquent, till he so far yielded to vanity as to publish his speeches, when men thought so no longer." "D'Aguesseau," says St^e. Beuve†, "in the Fourth Instruction to his son, recommends to him some of Le Maître's speeches, where he would find excellences which make it a subject of regret that his eloquence was not bold

* Siècle de Louis XIV., vol. i. p. 170. † Vol. i. p. 385.

enough to walk alone, unencumbered by the numerous train of orators, historians, and fathers of the Church*, which it always carries after it." Many of these quotations were in all likelihood added by the penitent at a subsequent period, as if to justify and sanctify a too exclusively literary publication; but a goodly number of poetical and mythological flowers were certainly the orator's own. Mars and Neptune, for instance, interfere on behalf of a servant girl who had been seduced by the son of a locksmith. And then follow many examples more of the singular taste of the age.†

* This was not peculiar to Le Maître. An epigrammatic phrase of the time declares "that the preachers quote the classics, and the lawyers the fathers."

† Fontaine, Mém. pour servir à l'Hist. de P. R., vol. i. pp. 222, 224. Lancelot, vol. i. p. 312. The following is Mr. Hallam's judicious estimate of Le Maître's oratory: "The forensic speeches of Le Maître are more eloquent, in a popular sense of the word, more ardent, more imaginative than those of Patru; the one addresses the judges alone, the other has a view to the audience; the one seeks the success of his cause alone, the other that and his own glory together. The one will be more prized by the lovers of legal reasoning, the other by the majority of mankind. The one more reminds us of the orations of Demosthenes for his private clients, the other of those of Cicero. Le Maître is fervent and brilliant, he hurries us with him; in all his pleadings, warmth is his first characteristic, and a certain elegance is the second. In the power of statement I do not perceive that he is inferior to Patru; both are excellent. Wherever great moral or social topics, or extensive views of history and human nature, can be employed, Le Maître has the advantage. Both are concise, relatively to the common verbosity of the bar; but Le Maître has much more that might be retrenched, not that it is redundant in expression, but unnecessary in substance. This is owing to his ambitious display of general erudition; his quotations are too frequent and too ornamental, partly drawn from the ancients, but more from the fathers. Ambrose, in fact, Jerome and Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil and Gregory, were the models whom the writers of this age were accustomed to study; and hence they are often, and Le Maître among the rest, too apt to declaim where they should prove, and to use arguments from analogy, rather striking to the common hearer than likely to weigh much with a tribunal. He has less simplicity, less purity of taste than Patru; his animated language would in our courts be frequently effective with a jury, but would seem too indefinite and commonplace to the judges. We should crowd to hear Le Maître; we should be compelled to

We may well believe that the close connection of his family with Port Royal, and especially the example of his aunts, was not without influence upon the young advocate. As early as 1634 *, a lively correspondence had taken place between him and La Mère Agnès, then Abbess of Tard, upon the subject of his intended marriage, to which she, of course, offered a strenuous though guarded opposition. The match was, for some reason, broken off, and Le Maître applied himself to his profession with renewed ardour. At last, in August, 1637, the death of his aunt, Madame d'Andilly, made a deep impression upon his mind. He was a constant attendant by her sick bed, where he heard the exhortations by which M. de St. Cyran endeavoured at the same time to teach the dying woman how to die, and her surviving friends to live in hourly readiness for death. And the successful pleader, the idol of the courts, was astonished at the eloquence, more persuasive than his own, which flowed from the lips of the quiet ecclesiastic. No far-fetched metaphors attested the speaker's learning; no subtle turns of wit surprised the listeners into applause; no loud declamation took their convictions by sudden storm; the force was that of a soul deeply moved by the reality of its message, knowing that it spoke of what most truly concerned its hearers and itself. And when, at last, St. Cyran, in the recital of the Service for the dying, came to the solemn words, "Depart from this world, O Christian soul, in the name of the omnipotent God who created thee!" Le Maître could no longer restrain himself, but, bursting into a flood of tears, escaped from the room where death had now claimed his own to indulge his emotions in the solitude of the moonlit garden. There he took the resolution, to which he

decide with Patru. They are both, however, very superior advocates, and do great honour to the French bar."—Hallam, Literary History, 5th edit. vol. iii. pp. 368, 369.

* Lettres de la Mère Agnès, vol. i. pp. 38, 45, 53.

immovably adhered, of abandoning the law and devoting the remainder of his days to the service of God in strict seclusion. And to St. Cyran, who joyfully accepted the charge of so promising a penitent, he committed the direction of his conscience.*

With characteristic good sense, St. Cyran's first advice was that he should not quit the exercise of his profession till the end of the term then in progress. The reason given was that the confessor wished to diminish the unavoidable éclat of such a conversion: another might be that he desired to try how far the new resolution of retirement could withstand the intoxication of applause and success. For some months, therefore, Le Maître continued to advocate the interests of his clients, but hardly with his wonted force. A crucifix, dusty and neglected, which, though suspended over the bench, he had never seen before, now irresistibly attracted his eyes, and moved him, he says, more to tears than to eloquence. An envious rival marked the change, and said with a sneer, that Le Maître's speeches had less effect in convincing the judges than in lulling them to sleep. The orator was not yet so dead to the world as to be indifferent to the taunt. At the next sitting of the court he gathered up all his strength, and fixing his eyes on his rival, spoke to him, and him only, in such a manner as to convince the world that the talents of which he renounced the exercise were still in their meridian splendour. "He left the court," says Fontaine †, "resolved to sacrifice to God powers so rare, and to render mute for ever, a tongue which was the admiration of all France."

The resolution was steadfastly kept. When the courts again commenced their sittings, and Le Maître failed to make his appearance, the news was soon bruited abroad through Paris, and created the utmost astonishment. Many

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 308. Fontaine, vol. i. p. 225.
† Vol. i. p. 229.

persons, and among them some even of his own relations, looked upon the change as the result of youthful enthusiasm which would soon pass away. His uncle, Henri Arnauld, afterwards Bishop of Angers, advised him to enter the Church, and to strive after the rewards which she offers to a laudable ambition. But his intentions were at once more fixed and more self-denying than friends or indifferent critics believed. He wrote a letter to the Chancellor thanking him for his past protection; another to his father, in the hope of making some impression upon his heretical opinions and irregular habits. In both he declared his fixed resolution not to exchange the legal for the ecclesiastical career, but to devote the remnant of his days to solitary prayer and repentance. His first place of refuge was the lodging of St. Cyran, opposite the gate of the Chartreux, a monastery which at first he felt inclined to enter. But Madame le Maître, desiring to provide for her son the means of a still more complete solitude, caused to be built in the court-yard of Port Royal de Paris, a set of chambers with a separate entrance. These were completed by Christmas of the same year, when Le Maître, with the companions who had by this time joined him, took possession of them.*

The first of these whom I shall mention was his brother, Simon le Maître de Sericourt, a young soldier, who, though only in the twenty-sixth year of his age, had already found opportunities of distinction. He formed one of the garrison which, under his cousin Isaac Arnauld, held Philipsburg against the Imperialists in 1635. The town was defended only by earthworks, and its whole strength lay in an unusually wide and deep fosse. The winter was of extraordinary severity, and at last the ice, though broken by the besieged every three hours, resisted their utmost efforts, and afforded the enemy a safe passage into the

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 313. Fontaine, vol. i. pp. 230, 232, 235, 239.

town. The garrison, reduced by disease to 400 men, could offer no effectual resistance, and the governor, after having bravely defended himself for a time in a house where he had taken refuge with some of his officers, was compelled to surrender himself prisoner of war. Both he and De Sericourt were confined in the fortified town of Esslingen, refusing a partial liberty on parole in the hope of effecting an escape.

The principal reason why Isaac Arnauld adopted this course showed him worthy of his name. He was not ignorant that rumours were current in Paris, that he had weakly surrendered his charge, and that his defence of Philipsburg had been all but treacherous. And he was resolved to hasten home on the first possible opportunity to give the lie to these slanders by boldly demanding a trial. The enterprise was not easy; but brave men make the opportunities for which cowards wait in vain. He began by bribing certain Frenchmen in the imperial service to aid and accompany his escape, with promises of promotion in his own regiment of carabineers. The house in which he and De Sericourt were confined looked upon the city ramparts, which were surrounded by a deep ditch. Some of M. Arnauld's confederates secretly sounded the fosse, and succeeded in discovering a practicable place; the difficulty was how to get there, in short, how to procure a rope-ladder? The two prisoners, every time they were taken out for exercise, invited the guard to join them in some rough game, giving the preference, when they could do so without suspicion, to one called *sangler l'ane*, in which one of the players has his arms bound with a cord. Was no cord to be found, money was given to a soldier to buy one, and no account exacted of the change, so that it became the interest of the guard not to inquire too closely into the fact, that the rope used for one day's game was rarely forthcoming on the next. At last all was ready for the enter-

prise, which succeeded as it deserved to do, notwithstanding many alarms and hair-breadth escapes. The French officers in the emperor's service, who deserted with them, enabled them to assume the character of recruits for the imperial army, so that on one occasion they successfully underwent the scrutiny of a party who were professedly looking out for the governor of Philipsburg. A long and hazardous journey brought them at last to Venice, where Isaac Arnauld withstood many inducements to enter the army of the republic, preferring to hasten to Paris, where he at once surrendered himself prisoner at the Bastille. It is pleasant to know that at the end of a few months, he was honourably acquitted of all charges preferred against him.*

The perils of the defence of Philipsburg, and the escape from Esslingen, may not have been without effect upon the mind of a young soldier, who had been brought up as religiously as De Sericourt. But a circumstance which took place at the siege of La Capelle, where he served during the next campaign, made a still deeper impression upon him. One of the companions of his escape had on one occasion loitered a little behind the rest, had never rejoined them, and had been given up for lost. How great then De Sericourt's astonishment at his re-appearance with a wonderful tale of his preservation upon his lips! He had been attacked by the imperial soldiery, rifled, pierced with many frightful wounds, and left for dead. His mangled body had, however, attracted the attention of some passing woman, who perceiving in it faint signs of life, forgot the Frenchman in the wounded soldier, carried him to her cottage, kept him till he was well, and at last aided his escape.† It was then with a mind full of wonder and of awe at the mysterious ways of Providence, that De Sericourt returned to Paris, there to learn that his brilliant

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 300 *et seq.* † Lancelot, vol. i. p. 305.

brother had renounced his profession and retired into penitential solitude. He eagerly sought an interview, which Le Maître, contrary to his custom, willingly accorded. But the change in the latter's appearance was so great, that De Sericourt hardly recognised him. "Do you not know me then?" he said: "behold the Le Maître of old days. He is dead to the world, and now seeks only to die to himself. I have spoken to men long enough: I now desire to speak to God alone. I have troubled myself very uselessly to plead other men's causes: now in the secrecy and rest of my retreat, I plead only my own. . . . . Will you, brother, also do me the honour which some others have done, who believe and declare that I am mad?" De Sericourt confessed in reply, that he had for some time been more than half ready to follow his example, but that now nothing should prevent him. "I," said Le Maître, "have never been so happy as since I doffed my robes: you will certainly experience the same happiness if you are willing to lay aside your sword."*

These remarkable conversions seem to have suggested to St. Cyran the idea of forming a little hermit community (if such a term may be used) in the building erected by Madame le Maître at Port Royal de Paris. He assumed the direction of Le Maître and De Sericourt; others of his disciples whom he now associated with them, were Singlin, Lancelot, and a M. Gaudon.† The last-named soon grew tired of solitude and self-control, and may be dismissed from our recollection. Not so Singlin, the pupil whom St. Cyran chose and trained to be his successor in the spiritual direction of Port Royal. He is a striking instance of the fact, that the utmost moral force and discrimination may co-exist with the absence of remarkable talent or extensive learning. He was the son of a wine

* Fontaine, vol. i. p. 299.

† Lancelot, vol. i. p. 35.

merchant, and served his time to a draper. It was not till his twenty-second year that the desire to devote himself to a religious life, impelled him to ask advice and help of the celebrated Vincent de Paul. By him Singlin was sent to school to acquire so much of the rudiments of Latin as might qualify him to take orders, which in due time he received at the hands of his friend and patron. A humble place was soon found for him at the Hôpital de la Pitié, where he devoted himself with great ardour to the religious instruction of children, as well as to the service of the poor, especially, we are told, exerting himself on behalf of penitent women.

The simple docility of his character seems to have recommended him to St. Cyran, at whose house he became a permanent visitor, and as whose avowed disciple he at last enrolled himself. The high esteem in which the work of education was held by both was another link of union, and Singlin was induced to leave his hospital to undertake the training of two or three children under St. Cyran's eye. For a little while, in 1637, Singlin and his pupils inhabited the almost deserted buildings of Port Royal des Champs, whence he was summoned by his master to become the associate of Le Maître and de Sericourt. We shall have many subsequent opportunities of tracing the development of his character and describing his relation to the community of Port Royal.*

As Singlin was the future spiritual director of the solitaries, so Claude Lancelot represents to us the schools, the grammars, and the system of education for which Port Royal became so widely famous. He has told the tale of his own early connection with St. Cyran in the memoirs which still remain, a lasting evidence of both the master's and the pupil's virtues. How, born of a respectable Pari-

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 287 *et seq.* Besoigne, vol. iv. p. 160 *et seq.*

sian family, he was educated from his twelfth to his twenty-second year in the seminary of St. Nicholas du Chardonnet: how he imbibed there a certain amount of Greek and Latin, and theology, so that he prepared for the priesthood by taking the lowest orders, yet had never been compelled to read one line of the New Testament, which, said some of the monks, was not as useful to many people as the "Introduction à la Vie dévote:" how at last he heard of St. Cyran, as a man comparable for depth of learning and doctrine to the great Augustine, and hardly knew rightly who Augustine was, yet conceived a strong desire to see his modern likeness; how his desire was, at last, accomplished, and the great Doctor seemed wonderfully to incline to so ignorant and simple a lad as himself: how he longed to leave the seminary to put himself under St. Cyran's guidance: how his plans were opposed by the good fathers who had trained him, and yet were realised in spite of their opposition; and how great was his joy to find himself associated with this little company of which I have spoken: —all this may be read in the first pages of Lancelot's narrative, told with a fascinating simplicity. But when once he has informed the reader of the nature of that connection with St. Cyran, which gives him the right to speak of his master, he is thenceforward silent about himself. And we must look in other pages than his for the records of a blameless life, which, prolonged through great part of a century, was constantly employed in works of laborious beneficence.*

Our sketch of the first hermits of Port Royal would be incomplete without a passing mention of one who, though not yet associated with them, was under St. Cyran's guidance, and soon became not the least remarkable among them. This was Isaac le Maître de Saçi, a younger brother

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 2, 8, 9, 16, 24, 30, 34.

of Le Maître and De Sericourt. A little after the siege of Philipsburg the report that her soldier-son had been slain in the assault reached Madame le Maître, and plunged her into deep affliction. St. Cyran visited her on an errand of consolation, when, after some conversation, she informed him that she had a son whom she intended to give to the Church, and that the most solid comfort which he could administer to her would be to direct the conscience of the young man, then about twenty-two years of age. The request was granted. St. Cyran had not hitherto known De Saçi: he found that to know was to love and to entertain the highest hopes of him. Not long after, De Saçi was attacked by dangerous illness, and his mother, in the extremity of her grief and fear, declared that she had lost all hope. "Lost all hope!" said St. Cyran; "do you not know, that to lose your son, would be, perhaps, the greatest loss which the Church could suffer?"*

Such were the materials of which this little community was composed. Singlin, Gaudon, and Lancelot occupied one set of apartments; the two brothers lived separately in another. Every morning, an hour after midnight, all assembled in Singlin's room to say matins; De Sericourt undertaking to wake them with military regularity. Some were occupied with the education of two or three children, who lived with them: all spent many hours in prayer and meditation. St. Cyran, who visited them, at least, every other day, directed their thoughts and studies: sometimes assembling them all to take part in a conference upon some great truths of religion. We may well believe that in the ardour of such a first love as this, austerity and self-denial were not slow to manifest themselves; but it is a fact more worthy of record, that the little household was pervaded by a spirit of content and joy.†

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 298, 299. † Lancelot, vol. i. p. 35.

Yet the blow, which had been long impending, was now about to fall. At two o'clock on the morning of May 14th, 1638, St. Cyran's house was surrounded by a strong body of gens d'armes. As the unsuspecting object of their search remained quietly within, they made no attempt to gain admittance till about six, when the officer in command found him occupied in reading Augustine with his nephew. To the polite intimation that the King had ordered his arrest, St. Cyran replied as politely, that it was his greatest pleasure to obey his Majesty's commands whenever they were notified to him; and with no more delay than was needful to exchange his dressing gown for a cassock, declared himself ready to accompany his captors. Vincennes, a prison which still remains a mute witness to the misery of many illustrious and many forgotten captives, was announced as his destination. A part of the detachment of soldiers was left to mount guard over his papers; a part escorted the coach which contained this dangerous prisoner of state. He had forgotten even to snatch up a book to solace the first weary hours of confinement; but in the park at Vincennes, caught sight of his friend D'Andilly, who had set out at that early hour for his country house at Pomponne. By favour of the guard a few hasty words of farewell were exchanged; and D'Andilly put into his friend's hands a copy of Augustine's Confessions, which he was at the moment reading, and which, in happier days, he had received from him as a gift.*

At first the prisoner was harshly treated: he was placed in very strict confinement and denied the assistance of a servant. The MSS. which were discovered at his house, amounting to more than thirty folio volumes, were carried to the Chancellor. Others which escaped the notice of the guards, and which formed part of his great work

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 57, 60.

against the Calvinists, were burned by M. de Barcos, lest they should be tortured by hostile interpretation into evidence of heresy in the author. St. Cyran did not learn his loss till some months had elapsed, and then found it very hard to preserve his equanimity. It was the greatest loss, he said to Singlin, which he had ever suffered; one which delivered him from the fear of any other. Such losses as these, he said on another occasion, describing his own case under cover of another name, — losses of blessings which are valued only because coming from God, are, if humbly accepted, excellent preparations for the final sacrifice which a man may be called upon to make to God of himself and his life.*

St. Cyran and his friends were left to conjecture the real causes of this arbitrary imprisonment. In general it was felt that the Cardinal feared the possible hostility of a man who steadily rejected all his offers of favour and protection. They had been repeated not long before the arrest. "I remember," says Lancelot†, "that some days after the imprisonment of M. de St. Cyran, M. de Barcos told me, that if he and his uncle had been willing to listen to overtures made to them, each of them might have had benefices to the amount of 40,000 livres, and that his uncle would not have been where he was." And not long before he died, St. Cyran said to Angélique Arnauld, "that the narrow way had compelled him to choose between a prison and a bishopric; for it was at that time easy to see that under a government which was willing to rule only over slaves, the refusal of one must necessarily lead to the other."‡ At the same time, special causes of distrust and animosity existed, or were believed to exist. St. Cyran was supposed to know that about the Bishop of Luçon which the Cardinal Minister might not choose to have revealed.

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 61, 69, 71. † Vol. i. p. 93.

‡ Besoigne, vol. iii. p. 380.

A favourite scheme with Richelieu was to obtain for the Gallican Church a certain independence of the Papacy, by forming it into a Patriarchate, with himself as Patriarch,—a plan to which St. Cyran's opposition might be considered certain. Gaston, Duke of Orleans, had married a princess of the house of Lorraine, and the Cardinal, who had designed him for his niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, moved the Parliament of Paris to annul the marriage, on the plea that it had been contracted without the King's consent. And although St. Cyran had been careful to express no public opinion on this matter, it could not be doubtful what his sentiments were. We have already seen how many causes of offence he had given to the Jesuits, and Des Noyers, secretary of state, was so devoted to the interests of the Society, as to be designated, by popular rumour, a lay brother. The Capuchins, too, were jealous of his influence as a confessor, and Père Joseph, the secret adviser and tool of Richelieu, was a Capuchin, and had, as he thought, a personal reason for jealousy. But in addition to all these, there was a motive which may perhaps, without injustice to Richelieu, be deemed to have weighed with him as much as any other. In the words of De Retz, he was "a very great man, whose chief foible was the inability to despise little things." Not content with directing the destinies of Europe, he hungered for the professional fame of a theologian, and had once published a catechism, in which he taught that contrition, unaccompanied by any sentiment of love for God, or *attrition*, as it was technically called, was sufficient to warrant a priest in giving absolution to his penitent. In some notes appended to a translation of Augustine, De Virginitate, one Père Seguenot, a father of the Oratory, had advanced a contrary opinion. Certain of his brethren, who were at variance with Seguenot on another question, appealed to the Cardinal, taking care to draw his attention to the obnoxious opinions on contrition.

Père Condren, the general of the order, was summoned, and to shield his subordinate from the Cardinal's anger, insinuated, if he did not allege, that St. Cyran was the real author of the book, to which Seguenot had contributed only his name. The artifice availed only to draw down unjust punishment on the innocent, without rescuing the guilty. The book was censured by the Sorbonne, and when St. Cyran was sent to Vincennes, Seguenot was immured in the Bastille, neither of them destined to regain his liberty during the lifetime of the Cardinal. Such, at least, were the reasons for his arbitrary act which the minister gave, when after a time the Prince de Condé condescended to solicit St. Cyran's liberation. "Do you know of whom you are speaking?" answered Richelieu. "That man is more dangerous than six armies. Look at my catechism upon the table there; it has been printed twenty-two times. *I* say that attrition with confession is sufficient; *he* believes that contrition is necessary. And in the affairs of Monsieur's marriage, all France has given way to me, and he alone has had the hardihood to oppose me."*

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 75—84, 176. I quote the following curious note from Lancelot, vol. i. p. 207. Hardouin de Beaumont de Perefixe, at the time Archbishop of Paris, told Angélique de St. Jean, on the 10th June, 1664, that "one day M. le Cardinal de Richelieu, while he was at Compiègne, called me to him and said, 'Beaumont, I have done a thing to-day which will excite a great outcry against me. This morning I have caused the Abbé de St. Cyran to be arrested by a royal warrant. I foresee that all learned and pious men will rise up against me, for we must acknowledge that he has these two qualities—he is learned and pious. Thus, all those who know him, and a great number of persons whom he directs, will think that I have acted very unjustly. . . . Whatever may be said of me on this occasion, I am persuaded that both Church and State ought to be obliged to me for what I have done, and that I have rendered them a great service; for I have been warned that this abbé has peculiar and dangerous opinions, which some day may excite noise and division in the Church; and it is one of my maxims, that whatever can cause trouble in religion can also produce it in the state, and that thus to prevent it is to render an important service to both.'"

Not many days after St. Cyran's arrest, the Archbishop of Paris notified to the penitents of Port Royal that their close proximity to the sisterhood was considered unseemly, and that they must provide for themselves another abode. It was in vain that Singlin represented that not even the slightest communication took place between the members of the community; the decree was absolute. In this strait, the deserted buildings of Port Royal des Champs offered themselves as an appropriate retreat. The valley had been almost uninhabited for twelve years; the gardens of the monastery were overgrown with weeds and brambles, and the marshes again exhaled their unwholesome vapours. But the hermits were not in a mood to regard such obstacles as these: the uncalculating spirit of monastic austerity might possibly look upon them as advantages. About Whitsuntide, therefore, they and their pupils joyfully took possession of the spot which was endeared, at least to the sons of Madame le Maître, by so many sacred associations. Their life was the same as at Paris, one of austere and silent separation, except at night, when they ascended the hill that hung above their dwelling, that they might breathe a fresher air for a while, and there chant their evening song with an accordant voice of praise. Yet were they not suffered to remain in peace even here. A commissioner was sent down to wring from them evidence of the supposed crimes of St. Cyran and of their own complicity in them. For this task M. de Laubardemont had been selected, a man already infamous for the part which he had taken in the judicial murder of Urbain Grandier, and destined soon to receive a mortifying repulse from St. Cyran, who steadily refused to answer his questions, on the ground that he was a layman. He did not succeed much better at Port Royal than at Vincennes. Le Maître had not quite forgotten the advocate in the hermit, and showed that he had learned from unwilling witnesses the art of baffling a cross-exami-

nation. His retirement from the world, he told his examiner, had been the work of God only; his present occupation was prayer, reading the Scriptures, and the study of the fathers; St. Cyran's advice to him always had been of the most temperate and practical kind; he had never heard him speak of attrition and contrition, and so forth, through countless interrogatories. Laubardemont returned to Paris with this unsatisfactory report, and a catalogue of the heretical books which he had discovered, namely, the Bible, the New Testament in Greek and Latin, five or six volumes of St. Augustine's works, a St. Paulinus, and a translation of part of St. Chrysostom. He did not tell his superiors that when he had asked Le Maître whether he saw visions, the latter had gravely answered in the affirmative, adding "that when he opened one of his windows he had a vision of the hamlet of Vaumurier, while from the other he saw the village of St. Lambert; but that other visions than these he had none." But the friends of Port Royal took care that the joke should be told in Paris, and it was amidst universal laughter that Laubardemont informed the hermits, on the 12th July, that within three days they must quit their new home.*

Not knowing whither to turn, they took refuge for a while at an inn, in the Fauxbourg St. Jacques, not far from Port Royal de Paris. Le Maître, the best known, and therefore to the government the most obnoxious of their number, asked admittance in vain of several religious houses of Paris. He received in substance the same answer from all, that they had property to care for, and could not afford to embroil themselves with the court. At last an asylum presented itself to Lancelot, in the house of one of his pupils, at Ferté Milon, a little town about fifty miles

* Laubardemont's examination of Le Maître and De Sericourt is preserved in the Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces pour servir à l'Histoire de P. R. (Utrecht Recueil), p. 2 *et seq.* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 103, 111.

from the capital. Thither after a time he was followed by Le Maître and De Sericourt; and their common life of unpretending austerity was resumed. Nor is their brief sojourn at Ferté Milon without a wider interest than attaches even to the fortunes of Port Royal. Their hostess, Madame Vitart, was aunt of Jean Racine, known to the world as the first tragic poet of France, to us as a pupil in the schools of Port Royal, and by turns the hot adversary and affectionate apologist of the community. The grandmother of Racine, with two of her sisters, ended her days in the monastery; and the aunt of the poet, under the name of Agnès de St. Thèkle Racine, worthily filled the post of abbess from 1691 till her death in 1700. Once more, however, about the end of the year 1639, the solitaries determined to try to realise their conceptions of the hermit life at Port Royal. They hoped that their unobtrusive sojourn at Ferté Milon would by this time have acquitted them of all revolutionary intentions; and no place seemed so fit for their purpose as the deserted monastery. Thither accordingly they proceeded, and almost unconsciously founded a community, which gradually drew to itself no small proportion of the learning, the genius, and the wit of France. They were accompanied by M. Vitart, who took upon himself the management of the resources of the abbey, and by a band of pious women, who, notwithstanding the entreaties of Le Maître and St. Cyran, asked and obtained permission of the archbishop to occupy a portion of the buildings apart from the solitaries. But, as had been the case in Paris, all verbal communication between them was prohibited.*

In the meantime, neither the friends nor the enemies of St. Cyran were idle. Bignon, Avocat-Général, Molé, Procureur-Général, Cospéan, Bishop of Nantes, Sponde, Bishop

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 118, 120, 125. Fontaine, vol. i. pp. 308, 326.

of Pamiers, and many others, implored the Cardinal to release the man whom the Church of France had acknowledged as her chosen champion. These solicitations were again renewed and again repulsed, when, in December, 1638, the death of Père Joseph seemed to have removed a powerful obstacle. The dedication of the Reply to Père Garasse, of which the Cardinal had said, when it first appeared, that he would give ten thousand crowns to know its author, was now recalled to his memory as the work of St. Cyran, but in vain. On the other hand, M. de Langres was base enough to draw up a memoir hostile to the prisoner, which he secretly conveyed into the hands of Richelieu. Manuscript copies of it were at the same time circulated in quarters where it was likely to be favourably received; a meanness which called forth an indignant answer from the joint pens of Le Maître and Antoine Arnauld. But neither the attack nor the apology was published during the lifetime of their object.*

Not many days after St. Cyran's arrest arrived the news that, eight days before that event, namely, on the 6th May, 1638, the Bishop of Ypres had died, in his fifty-third year. The great work of his life was, however, accomplished. With dying hands he traced the last lines of his Augustinus, which, in a brief will, dated half an hour before his death, he commended to the care of his chaplain and his two learned friends, Fromondus and Calenus. He did not wish, he said, that anything in his life's work should be altered. But if the Roman See decreed any alteration, he was an obedient son of the Church, wherein he had lived up to his dying hour. His intentions were carefully fulfilled, and his book, notwithstanding the intrigues of the Jesuits, appeared from the press of Louvain, in 1640. A second edition was printed in Paris, in 1641,

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 122, 417. Besoigne, vol. iii. p. 395.

a third at Rouen, in 1643. A copy of the second edition, in three weighty folios, filled with double columns of close small print, lies now upon my table. How utterly ineffective would be such a weapon of warfare in the present day, when even a pamphlet is deemed too unwieldy for purposes of controversy! Its very size would save it from men's perusal. It is like one of the great cannon, with its balls of boulderstone, which make a show of guarding the Bosphorus, compared with the Minié rifle, which has lately won the battles of the Porte. But its roar resounded throughout Christendom, and before many months had passed, the theological air was thick with various missiles.*

* Gerberon, Histoire du Jansenisme, vol. i. p. 7, *et seq.* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 101.

The Bishop of Ypres was buried in the choir of his cathedral, not far from the altar; and a tomb, on which a laudatory epitaph was engraven, erected over his remains. But the active malice of the Jesuits pursued the author of the Augustinus, even to his grave. In 1665, the then Bishop of Ypres, at the command, it was said, of Pope Alexander VII. and the Archduke Leopold, Governor of the Low Countries, secretly removed the tomb and its inscription. The chapter, some of whom probably remembered Jansen, remonstrated in vain. In 1672 one of them took advantage of a temporary vacancy in the see, and placed the following epitaph on the stone which covered the grave: "Here lies Cornelius Jansen, seventh Bishop of Ypres. It is not needful to say more. He lived 53 years, and died May 6th, 1638. Passer-by, pray for the repose of his soul." Even this simple memorial was not allowed to remain: a month after its erection it was taken away at the instigation of the Jesuits. So far on the authority of the editors of Lancelot. At the date of the publication of the Memoirs (1738) no token of Jansen's connection with the cathedral of Ypres existed, except an escutcheon bearing his arms, which hung on one of the columns. By the courtesy of a Belgian correspondent, however, I am furnished with the following extract from A. Baron: La Belgique Monumentale (1844). Having spoken of the second epitaph he goes on to say, "Le zèle de l'époque suivante fut moins charitable: on enleva à l'évêque hérésiarque son titre et jusqu'à son nom: et la pierre qui le recouvre, ne porte plus d'autre signe que cette croix mystérieuse dont on marque la sepulture d'un inconnu, et la date qu'on attache au monument d'un crime ou d'un malheur."

II.

St. Cyran's incarceration furnished a fresh proof that persecution is a very clumsy device for intercepting the progress of opinion; and that neither "stone walls" nor iron bars can make a prison for ideas. Though he was at first denied the use of pen and ink, and strictly forbidden to communicate with his friends, their affectionate ingenuity overcame all obstacles to their intercourse, and the few words of encouragement and instruction which penetrated to the outer world, were received with increased reverence as the utterances of a persecuted saint. By and by the rigours of his treatment were relaxed; he had powerful friends as well as powerful enemies at court; and perhaps the great Cardinal, busy with schemes of national aggrandisement, forgot to inquire how his theological opponents fared at Vincennes and in the Bastille. So St. Cyran directed more penitents from his cell than he had ever done before. Singlin, under his guidance, governed the nuns in the Fauxbourg St. Jacques as well as the hermits at Port Royal; and the austerities of discipline and penitence were not for a moment abated.

He fell at first into a profound but not unnatural depression. "God, who wished to make him humble," says Lancelot, "suffered him to be tempted by horrible imaginations, and fears of His judgment, which caused him inconceivable anguish. All that he read in Scripture only added to his terror. If he found that the blind who lead the blind fell with them into the ditch, he thought that the saying applied to himself. If he opened at the text,

'Every plant that my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up,' he imagined that his own time of uprooting was come, and that his imprisonment was the beginning. It seemed as if God had abandoned him for a season, and the Devil, to use the words of Scripture, had obtained permission to sift him like wheat." Nevertheless, this state of discouragement, produced by the sudden stroke of his arrest, and which [illegible] so many analogies in the mental history of faithful men of all churches, was not of long duration. "The calm returned after the tempest; and if God did not deliver him from his fetters, as He did St. Peter, He at least freed him from his pains, and filled him with a thousand consolations, by means of the very Scriptures, by which He had been pleased to afflict him." * And a letter which he wrote after some years of prison life, beautifully expresses the light in which he had learned to look upon it.

"We know not what we desire. It may be that God wishes to do things in a better way than we are able even to imagine. I am in no wise deceived, having always looked upon all these negotiations for my deliverance as very uncertain—and never putting any trust in the fair appearance which they seemed to present.' . . . . All kinds of persons are not fit to co-operate with God in the execution of His designs. We have only to continue to pray to Him, and to fight with heaven, to bend and conquer Him by holy violence—that is, by perseverance—for there is nothing so effectual with God as a constant groaning and an unceasing prayer, in words, and thoughts, and desires, and internal aspirations, which Heaven itself cannot withstand. And we must hope that, then, truth will triumph over falsehood, which shall find itself as weak in its artifices and cabals as it is in arguments and lawful proofs.

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 63–65.

"God will continue to afflict, but He will not abandon me. His persecutions, joined with His assurances and His grace, are more to be desired than His favours and caresses. I can tell you, in the heat of some unknown strength which I discover in myself, that my prison is my purgatory. God has placed me there: I shall remain there as long as He pleases; I truly wonder that I have survived all that I have suffered; but we must not complain of God's delays. The souls in purgatory do not complain, because they see continually what they owe to God, and are content to behold themselves His prisoners.

"I am careful to complain of nothing, knowing that God does all. . . . I am His, free or in prison; and am grieved that I cannot be His in a third way—by martyrdom—which I have at heart, and which clears away in one moment all the rust of life. After this, do not pity my imprisonment. I am ready to remain here a hundred years; to die here if God will. I only ask Him to give me strength to wrestle with my infirmities, which exercise my patience even more than they ruin my health. And I am ready for whatever He designs for me — for action or for suffering — which last, according to the precepts of the Gospel, is a no less worthy employment than the other." *

Thus, after a time, a cheerful resolution got the better of his despondency, and he was able to throw a gleam of wit over his misfortunes. A great lady, the Comptesse de St. Paul, is said to have encountered him one day in the chapel of Vincennes, and to have begged the favour of his prayers. "Alas! Madame," was the reply, "the prayers of souls in purgatory are without efficacy." His biographer cites the phrase as a proof of his humility: to me it appears to be rather an instance in which his habitual reserve in spiritual

* Fontaine, vol. ii. p. 17.

things extricated itself from a difficulty by help of a certain grave gallantry.*

St. Cyran's power of winning hearts was never more conspicuously displayed than during his imprisonment. It is true that his aversion to female society, which resulted in a determination never to speak to a woman except under absolute necessity, drew upon him the wrath of the governor's wife; at whose hands he suffered, he says, "a domestic persecution, incomparably greater than that from without." His very guards revered him as a saint, and testified their joy at his release by beating drums and firing muskets. It is less to be wondered at that the clergy attached to the chapel at Vincennes, professed the deepest admiration for his pious and charitable patience. Nor were his fellow-prisoners able to escape the contagious influence of his character. One, the Baron d'Enkenfort, an Imperialist general of reputation, had been sent to Vincennes as a prisoner of war, about the same time as himself. In the following year, however, M. de Feuquières, a French commander, and a connection of the Arnaulds, was taken prisoner at Thionville, and great exertions were made to effect his exchange for D'Enkenfort. The negotiations succeeded, and in March, 1640, M. Arnauld, the *ci-devant* governor of Philipsburg, undertook the pleasant office of announcing the happy intelligence to his brave enemy, and of escorting him from Vincennes to the house of D'Andilly. But on the following morning, as the party was on the point of setting out for Germany, bearing to M. de Feuquières a marshal's baton, and the appointment of governor to the Dauphin, the unexpected news arrived that he had died in captivity. It fell upon all like a thunderbolt, says the Abbé Arnauld†, who was present, and seemed to deprive the newly released

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 187.

† Mémoires de l'Abbé Arnauld (Michaud et Poujoulat, vol. ix.) p. 502.

prisoner of speech and motion. There was no help for it; the unlucky D'Enkenfort was reconducted to Vincennes as sadly as he had been joyfully released the night before. The singularity of the circumstance awoke in St. Cyran an interest in his fate; it seemed as if God had brought him back to prison for some special purpose; and the scrupulous director no longer hesitated to take charge of the penitent thus thrown into his hands. And the intercourse which, after peace had been concluded, the now successful general instituted with the friends of Port Royal, showed that he at least remembered the impressions which he had received at Vincennes.*

A fellow-prisoner with D'Enkenfort and St. Cyran was Johann von Werth, a celebrated partisan leader in the Thirty Years' War, whose name was chanted in the street songs of Paris, like the "Marlbrook" of the next century. He too was about to be exchanged when the Cardinal invited him to a grand court spectacle. It was a comedy called "Mirame," presented with new and ingenious "scenic effects;" the rising of the sun and moon; a sea covered with vessels; and a ballet to succeed, full of heathen gods and allegories. An eye-witness, the Abbé de Marolles, relates that places were reserved for the bishops and abbés, and even for the Cardinal's confessors and almoners. Within two boxes of these gay ecclesiastics sat the imperialist general, and remembered Vincennes and its prisoner as he gazed. For on being asked what he thought of the magnificence of the play, he replied that it was wonderful, but that he knew a thing more wonderful still, "that in the most Christian kingdom of France, bishops should be at the theatre, and saints in prison." The saying ran through Paris, but the Cardinal was silent!†

The disciples of St. Cyran delight to record examples of

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 136, 138, 206.

† Lancelot, vol. i. p. 137; Ste. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 8.

his thoughtful care for others, and especially how at Vincennes his own misfortunes seem to have stirred him up to a more than usual ardour of charity. All the poorer prisoners in the Château looked to him for material as well as spiritual aid; and he is said to have exercised the utmost economy and self-denial, that he might be able to spare part of his own allowance for the relief of their necessities. When we come to speak more particularly of his deep interest in education, we shall see how he found in the children of his gaolers objects of benevolent superintendence. There is, however, an instance of his watchful consideration for others, which is sufficiently characteristic to deserve special mention. The Baron de Beau-soleil was imprisoned in the Bastille, his wife and daughter at Vincennes, on a charge of superstitiously pretending to find water and veins of metal by means of the divining rod. The cause of their imprisonment, if known to St. Cyran, was not one which would enlist his sympathies on their behalf; perhaps he did not know it; but only remarked, that when mother and daughter appeared in the prison chapel, they were insufficiently and meanly clad. Without speaking to them on the subject, he wrote to Madame le Maître, begging her to provide for these ladies comfortable clothing, and such as befitted their rank. He did the same for the husband in the Bastille. And in the still extant letter, in which he gives the necessary directions, there is to me something almost touching in the thoughtfulness of the grave and reserved scholar, who himself could care for none of these things, that the garments should be cut and trimmed after the fashion of the day. He even remembers to have heard that a certain mantle ought to be adorned with black lace, and prays his correspondent, that if accordant with good taste, it may be so made.*

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 188.

We do not hear of any official document in which the real or ostensible charges against St. Cyran were stated. French justice in the seventeenth century was sudden and secret in her movements, nor easily induced to confess herself mistaken. The ill success of Laubardemont's attempt to find perilous matter in the opinions and occupations of the hermits at Port Royal has been already recorded. In 1639, when a whole year's imprisonment had worn itself away, and the accused was still unconscious of his alleged offence, he went to Vincennes, prepared to begin a long examination. But St. Cyran, who entertained the loftiest ideas as to the dignity of the priesthood, peremptorily refused to be catechised by any layman, and one Lescot, doctor of the Sorbonne and confessor of the Cardinal Minister, was substituted for Laubardemont. The interrogatory continued through twelve sittings, extending over three weeks, and only served to show the eminence of theological learning at which the prisoner stood above his judge. The task was indeed somewhat difficult. St. Cyran had published, at least avowedly, no theological books: he denied any share in the offensive notes of Seguenot; and the pernicious influence with which he was charged, was all oral and personal. So that Lescot's utmost hope was either, by artful questions, to entangle him in some expression of heretical opinion, or to extract from him, by promises or threats, an admission of error in the form of a retractation. But St. Cyran kept close to the Bible, the Fathers, and the Council of Trent: and the cross-examiner was baffled. In the procès-verbal of the interrogatory—as we at present possess it—the nice controversy between attrition and contrition plays a principal part: and, when all was over, Lescot left behind him a paper, containing a condemnation of the doctrine of *contrition*, with the hint that if St. Cyran would sign it, he might at once be

liberated. The prisoner made an offer in answer to this: if the Cardinal would take bail and permit him to reside in his own house for a few months, he would write a book against the Huguenot minister Du Moulin, in which the matter should be clearly explained. But Richelieu would be satisfied with nothing less than a formal recantation; and St. Cyran chose to remain where he was, rather than assume the position of a convicted heretic. Another year passed: and Lescot again found his way to Vincennes. The prisoner's friends, he said, had informed the Cardinal, that he was at last ready to make some satisfactory declaration in writing: what should it be? and in what form? St. Cyran called at once for pen and paper, and while his visitor was whispering in his ear the advisability of some distinct utterance upon contrition, hastily wrote a short profession of belief in the doctrines of the Catholic Church, as defined by the Council of Trent, and an emphatic denial that he had ever entertained any private (*particulières*) opinions of his own. But in the absence of a statement on the special point in dispute, there was not humiliation enough here: no hints of an increased rigour of imprisonment could extract more from St. Cyran: and the Cardinal was obdurate. Not long after, a third attempt was made. By the urgent solicitations of his friends, St. Cyran was induced to address to M. de Chavigni, secretary of state and his chief advocate with Richelieu, a letter in which he stated, that as the points in dispute between the advocates of attrition and of contrition had been left undecided by the Church, he was content to look upon either opinion as probably true: and that as a confessor he had acted upon both, according to the circumstances of the particular case. In writing this letter, which he did unwillingly and in deference to others' judgment, he had no expectation of producing the desired result. He was not

mistaken: the Cardinal gave no signs of relenting: and the prisoner turned for deliverance to God only.*

And deliverance came at last, when least looked for; for both cardinal and simple priest had more nearly played out their earthly parts than they deemed. On the 14th of December, 1642, St. Cyran's day, as the Port Royalists do not fail to note, Richelieu died at Paris, only a few months after he had crushed the conspiracy of Cinq Mars, and had thus established his supremacy on a firmer foundation than ever. St. Cyran was not at once set free; for it seemed as if the lapse of some short interval were needed to reverse the spell which the great minister had thrown over the king's mind; but his friends had immediate access to him, and on the 6th of February, 1643, he left Vincennes, after an imprisonment of nearly five years. His first care was to thank the powerful friends to whose intercession he owed his liberation; and then he hastened to Port Royal, where the good news was already known. La Mère Agnès had received it at an hour dedicated to profound silence; but she rose up in the midst of the nuns, and loosening her girdle, conveyed to them by this symbolical act the intelligence that God's servant no longer lay in bonds. Before long, a solemn thanksgiving was celebrated in the convent chapel, and the thirty-fifth Psalm, at which the Psalter chanced to open, was accepted by all as a hymn of praise which God had specially sent them for so happy an occasion. And beyond doubt the thoughts and hopes of all were fixed on coming years of prosperity to the community and to the whole Church of France, in which their spiritual father, who had so joyfully passed through his trial, was to have no small share.†

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 139, 140, 147, 150, 161. Fontaine, vol. i. p. 288; vol. ii. p. 7. Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 17, *et seq.*

† Lancelot, vol. i. p. 197, 205, 213. Besoigne, vol. i. p. 194. Fontaine, vol. ii. p. 28.

But the end was not distant. St. Cyran quietly resumed his old life, dividing his time between the direction of his penitents and his great work against the Protestants. A temporary storm was indeed raised by his old enemies the Jesuits, who attempted to fasten a charge of heresy upon a little catechism for children which he had published a few weeks before his liberation, and so far succeeded as to procure his citation before the court of the Archbishop of Paris. But the powerful interposition of M. de Chavigni made a speedy change, and the tempest died away as suddenly as it had arisen.* A worse thing was, that St. Cyran's friends began to note how his health was broken down by his long imprisonment, how he was unable to hold himself erect, and how unwillingly his body responded to the demands which his ardent spirit continued to make upon it. He was not unconscious of his danger; but it was one of his maxims that a man ought to die standing†, and so relaxed in none of his labours. Three days before his death, Lancelot, who was himself suffering from a tumour on the knee, went to his house. "You are only too happy," said St. Cyran, "if God begins to afflict you. Look at me! I am so weak that I can hardly hold myself up, and the slightest attack of fever would carry me off." On Sunday, October 11th, the news came to Port Royal that he was insensible and at the point of death, though on the previous evening he had been dictating to a disciple thoughts on the great mystery which he was so soon to explore. A brief interval of consciousness enabled his friends to administer to him the last sacraments of the Church, and once more to catch his living words. Then he again fell into a state of insensibility, and died before noon of the same day. The body was wrapped in lead, and, two days after, carried to the parish church of St. Jacques de Haut Pas, where it was

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 229.

† Stantem mori oportet.

solemnly interred, in presence of six bishops and a long train of attendant clergy. And in due time a stately tomb, on which was graven a proudly modest epitaph*, attracted the prayers of many a pious Jansenist and friend of Port Royal, who were not altogether without justification for the belief that it was the last resting-place of a saint.†

Is it needful to add, that the news of St. Cyran's death was received by some with signs of indecent exultation, and gave occasion in others to follies of superstitious affection? His heart was bequeathed to D'Andilly; his bowels were separately interred at Port Royal, with an inscription commemorative of his love for that house. Many handkerchiefs were dipped in his blood; and Le Maître and Lancelot committed the pious outrage of severing his hands, which were preserved as inestimable relics. Nay, his corpse, yet hardly cold, is said to have wrought a manifest miracle. De Bâcle, one of the first solitaries, crawled to the bed where it lay, on crutches, which had been necessary to him for months past, but having kissed the holy feet, and knelt awhile in silent prayer, departed hale and strong. On the other hand, the Jesuits declared that the arch-corrupter of souls had died like a heretic and a castaway; that God had so stricken him as to deprive him of the opportunity of receiving the last sacraments. So the friends

* I subjoin the epitaph for the sake of the curious in mural literature. Remark its implied, rather than explicit, denial of the charge of heresy.

Non erit tibi Deus recens. Non erit tibi veritas recens.

Hic jacet Dominus Johannes Vergier de Haurana, Abbas Sancti Sigiranni: qui raro admodum exemplo, humilitatem cum sublimiori scientiâ conjunxit: qui cum ardentissimo zelo pro unitate Ecclesiæ, traditione Patrum, et veritatibus quas ab antiquis acceperat, flagrasset, postquam cœpit calamum stringere adversus Hæreticos hujus temporis, pro defensione Ecclesiæ Catholicæ, cui unicè addictus erat, diem suum obiit, totius Cleri Gallicani et omnium proborum mœrore, XI Octobris, 1643, ætatis suæ 62.

Veritas. Charitas. Humilitas.

† Lancelot, vol. i. p. 242, *et seq.* p. 260.

of St. Cyran were compelled to procure a certificate from the curé of the parish, and to advertise in the "Gazette de France" a refutation of the slander.*

We cannot pass on our way, and leave the grave of the first, and in some respects the greatest, of the Port Royalists, without making an attempt, however ineffectual, to delineate his character. And yet much labour has been bestowed in vain, if the reader have not already learned to know both the man and his principles of action. He is an admirable example of what the Roman Catholic Church can do in building up the saintly character. Although involved in more than one controversy, and engaged throughout his life in investigating religious truths after a fashion of his own, which was not the fashion of his day, he is disturbed by no doubts, harassed by no uncertainty; and the whole strength of his nature is absorbed in the development of his religious faculties. Like the dying Jansen, who, when initiating the great controversy of modern Catholicism, professed himself the Church's obedient son, St. Cyran never doubts that his opposition to existing ecclesiastical authorities is truly allegiance to a higher Authority than all. So a great peace pervades his life. All he asks to know, is God's will, that he may obey it. He is constant and earnest in prayer, throwing his whole soul into the round of devotion which the Church prescribes for her ministers. Every symbolic act,—the sign of the cross, the holy water, the genuflections of the priest,—has a meaning and a help for him. And when God's will is, by these means, made plain to him, no power on earth can turn him from following after it.

Yet it is impossible that any one should be less inclined to the excesses of a mystical devotion. We have already noted the good sense and moderation displayed in his

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 250, 253, 256, 257. Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 188.

intercourse with Sœur Marie Claire. Once De Sericourt asked to be taught how to pray; for having been a soldier, he said, he needed this instruction more than all the rest. "St. Cyran answered more by actions than in words," narrates Lancelot*; "he only clasped his hands, cast down his head somewhat, and raising his hands towards God, said, 'This is all that we have to do: we only need to come humbly before God, and think ourselves too happy in that He looks down upon us.'" He gave no ear to tales of special revelations and miraculous cures†: he thought that with the former much that was merely human was inextricably mingled; and that the latter had been chiefly necessary at the beginning of the Christian dispensation. John the Baptist had worked no miracles; the Fathers, and especially the great Augustine, were not recorded to have possessed this power; and now, as in their days, Christian truth, supported on Scripture and tradition, was strong enough to dispense with this authentication. Nor was he more inclined to indulge in the excitements of remorse than in the raptures of mysticism. Though regular and strict in self-examination, he had discovered the great moral truth, that a forward look is a condition of Christian progress. To pass one's time in counting and bemoaning our little faults, is, he says, "like a child, who has tumbled down, and who instead of getting up again and running on, stops to cry and look at its dirty hands: an amusement which keeps it back much more than the fall itself." And for those who were conscious of the aid of Divine grace, to be discouraged because they still stumbled in the way, was nothing less than to distrust God's goodness and mercy.

He was a man of few words: incapable of "wearing his

* Lancelot, vol. ii. p. 41.

† Lancelot, vol. ii. chap. iii. p. 11, *et seq.*

‡ Lancelot, vol. ii. p. 351.

heart upon his sleeve:" hiding himself and his truth from all but a chosen circle of disciples. He thought that if he had his life to live again, he should spend it all in solitude and prayer. We have seen how careless he was of literary fame: if God could be served by a book, what matter who was the human instrument of grace? Even in writing, he thought that purity of heart was more important than elegance and force of style; though force could never be wanting to one who wrote with such solemn earnestness of purpose. "The least cloud," he said, "which is on our heart, will spread itself over our paper, like an evil breath, tarnishing the brightness of a mirror; the slightest ailment *(indisposition)* of our spirit is like a worm which will pass into our book, and gnaw the hearts of those who read it to the end of the world." There was something of Spanish reserve in him; and the pride against which he fought in himself, broke out in his high conceptions of the dignity of the priesthood. And so it is almost wonderful that men loved not less than they revered him; that his power of subjugating hearts was as great as his ability to command admiration. Yet if cold and haughty to the world, and especially to the great, to his friends he was all tenderness and moderation. Of those who are ready to obey him without question, he asks nothing without promising an ample return. When from his prison he entreats Lancelot to take charge of two children in whom he feels a deep interest, he does not prescribe a duty, but implores a favour: and offers, if ever he is set at liberty, to perform the same service for any little one whom Lancelot may send to him. And so those who came to him as a master, revered his memory as that of the tenderest and wisest of friends.

Perhaps the peculiar excellence of St. Cyran's character may be found in the balance and symmetry of his faculties.

Few men of his deep and ardent piety have so large a fund of practical wisdom. Not often are the men of practical wisdom able to exercise so strong a personal influence. And so St. Cyran was not weak enough to head a party and effect a religious revolution. He had little of that pliancy of affection which enabled St. Paul to be "all things to all men;" of that sympathetic tenderness, which, in the same Apostle, as in all great leaders of men's souls, made weakness the source of the truest strength. He could never have resolved to take into his service the men of one-sided faculties, who are the instruments by which all social revolutions are effected. But in the formation and conduct of a religious school, and in the moral qualities required for this object, it is not likely that he will ever be surpassed.

The year of St. Cyran's death witnessed the beginning of that dispute about the Livre de la Fréquente Communion, which was in truth the first muttering of the great Jansenist storm, already threatening over Port Royal. We must interrupt for a time the progress of our narrative, to become acquainted with the book and its author.

Antoine Arnauld, the youngest of the twenty children of Antoine Arnauld and Catherine Marion, was born at Paris, February 6th, 1612. He was thus the brother of Angélique and Agnès Arnauld, and the uncle of Le Maître and De Saçi, who were however about the same age as himself, and were accustomed to call him familiarly *le petit oncle*. He seems to have manifested the mental precocity characteristic of his family: for being educated with his two nephews, he could always, says Le Maître, recite his lessons without any preparation, beyond taking the last turn of the three. His college course finished, his own intention was to study law, but his mother's wishes, backed by the persuasion of St. Cyran, prevailed

upon him to begin the theological studies of the Sorbonne. Here his tutor was the Lescot, whom we have already encountered as the cross-questioner of St. Cyran in Vincennes, and who was destined to suffer more than one defeat from that able opponent. For St. Cyran had already marked Antoine Arnauld for himself: and in order to counteract the possible influence of Lescot, had recommended to his young disciple some of Augustine's shorter works upon grace. The result was, that in a thesis, which, in the ordinary scholastic course he defended, six years before the publication of Jansen's Augustinus, Arnauld distinctly propounded the doctrine of grace, for which he was to encounter fifty years of toil, and combat, and suffering.*

His success at the university was almost beyond example brilliant: his great learning was not more remarkable than his readiness of debate; so that Richelieu himself, who loved to honour ability so long as he could hope to enlist it in his service, is said to have distinguished him one day by an unexpected visit, wishing to surprise him in his studious solitude. And a smooth path of church preferment seemed to have opened before him, when an unseen obstacle suddenly started up: it was necessary, before he could proceed in the career which he had chosen, that he should receive the lesser sacerdotal orders; while the degree of Doctor in the Sorbonne could be conferred only on a priest. But he had grave doubts as to his vocation to the holy office: thought that theological learning and blameless morals were not of themselves sufficient to warrant a man in taking upon himself responsibilities so awful. In this dilemma he applied to his confessor, one Feron, who temporarily overcame his scruples, so that he took the first irrevocable step. Then his difficulty returned

* Besoigne, vol. v. p. 337, *et seq.*

with more than its original force, and he betook himself to St. Cyran, already a prisoner at Vincennes, as the only safe guide. The sternness of the great director's principles could not be better exemplified than in the letters which, at some peril, he succeeded in conveying to Arnauld. He altogether blamed the course which had been adopted. No man could acceptably labour in the vineyard who had not been expressly sent thither by the Holy Spirit. To become a priest for the sake of a Doctor's degree, was to subordinate the greater to the less. Yet in a second letter, being perhaps touched with the penitent's entire and unconditional submission to his advice, he recommends that he should proceed with his theological studies, and prepare himself by practical religious exercises for the place which he sought in the Church. Solitude, fasts twice in the week, humble and prayerful study of the Scriptures, and especially of chosen passages, which were to be copied and committed to memory—these were the means of grace which he pointed out. The result did not disappoint his expectations; and the brilliant young theologian, whose earlier dreams had been of a career such as the Church had offered to Richelieu, or afterwards to De Retz, was gradually conquered by the subtle influence of Port Royal. His scholastic studies and success were unintermitted; but he resigned benefices which he had long held, he refused others which powerful relatives pressed upon his acceptance, and before he received the priesthood, he made over the whole of his patrimony, except so much as would procure the bare necessaries of life, to the Abbey of Port Royal. In 1641, therefore, he became Doctor: though Richelieu, who had by this time learned his connexion with St. Cyran, successfully opposed his admission as a member of the Sorbonne. This crowning honour of theological study in the France of the seventeenth century, was

accorded to him two years later, immediately after the Cardinal's death.*

This was the turning point of Antoine Arnauld's life. A few months before he received his Doctor's degree, his mother, now the Sœur Catherine de Sainte Felicité, died at Port Royal de Paris, of which house she had been an inmate for fifteen years. She was attended on her death-bed by Singlin, to whom, when he asked for a last message to Antoine Arnauld, she replied, "I beg you to say to my youngest son, that as God has engaged him to defend the truth, I exhort and conjure him never to relax in that labour: but to sustain it fearlessly,—even at the peril of a thousand lives; and tell him, that I pray God that he may maintain the truth in humility, and not be puffed up by the knowledge of it, seeing that it is not his, but belongs to God only." The dying words of such a mother, may be supposed to have sunk deeply into the heart of a young scholar, whose natural ardour in the pursuit of truth had been fed by a long series of academical triumphs. And the impression was renewed by the solemn oath, administered to him by the Sorbonne, in which he bound himself to defend the truth "usque ad effusionem sanguinis"—even to the shedding of blood. "I do not know," he said to those who took the oath with him, "if we sufficiently reflect upon what we are about to do. This is not a mere ceremony—it is a grand contract: and we do wrong to enter upon it if we have not carefully considered whither, under God's Providence, it may lead us." How faithfully he kept this oath the whole sequel of this history will show. Of fifty-three years of his subsequent life, he passed thirty-one in concealment or in exile for truth's sake. And when in extreme old age he was entreated by his faithful friend and fellow-

* Besoigne, vol. v. p. 344, *et seq.* Lettres d'Ant. Arnauld, vol. i. pp. 1, 4, 9, 12, 16. Fontaine, vol. i. p. 369, *et seq.*

worker Nicole, to rest awhile from his controversial labours, he is said to have replied, with a sublime energy, which at once expresses his whole nature—"Rest? have I not all eternity to rest in?" *

Before the completion of his theological studies, Arnauld's polemical genius had impelled him to the composition of a little work on the love of God, in answer to a Jesuit Father, Sirmond. But in 1643 he attracted to himself the notice of all theological France, by his celebrated book†, "Of Frequent Communion, in which the opinions of Fathers, Popes, and Councils, as to the Use of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, are faithfully set forth; designed for the benefit of persons who seriously think of turning to God, and of pastors and confessors, zealous for the salvation of souls." The origin of the book is somewhat curious. Madame de Gueméné, in one of her fits of devotion, was entreated by Madame de Sablé, a great lady, who was also destined to end her days in Port Royal, to accompany her to a ball, immediately after she had received the communion. She withstood the solicitation, alleging, as her reason, the authority of her director. Madame de Sablé's Jesuit confessor, Père de Sesmaisons, was not so scrupulous; and, perhaps, thinking this a good opportunity of rescuing Madame de Gueméné from unsafe hands, prepared a short treatise on the use of communion, which was shown to the Princess, and by her to Arnauld. The doctrine of this treatise, which was entitled "Is it better to communicate often or seldom?" ‡ appears to have been

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 321—323. Mém. pour servir. vol. iii. p. 301. Besoigne, vol. v. p. 357.

† De la Fréquente Communion, où les Sentimens des Pères, des Papes, et des Conciles, touchant l'Usage des Sacremens de Penitence et d'Eucharistie sont fidelement exposés: pour servir d'adresse aux personnes qui pensent serieusement à se convertir à Dieu: et aux pasteurs et confesseurs zélés pour le bien des âmes.

‡ Question s'il est meilleur de communier souvent ou rarement?

that the Eucharist is to be used ceremonially as a means of grace, without reference to the state of mind of the recipient; it even went so far as to say, that "the more we are devoid of Divine Grace, the more boldly ought we to approach Jesus Christ in the Eucharist." Against this most repulsive form of the doctrine of Sacraments, Arnauld arrayed a vast army of citations from the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the Canons of the Church, meeting the allegations of his opponent sentence by sentence, throwing the whole of his reply into geometrical form, and concluding every section, as it were, with a Q.E.D. He insists on the necessary precedence of the internal work of grace over the external administration of Sacraments; repentance before confession; contrition before absolution; a genuine and complete penance before communion. And though the method of the book appears now in the last degree stiff and formal, and, as in all his voluminous works, the naked severity of the reasoning is not relieved by any glimpse of the author's individuality, we see, by comparing this with the numerous replies which it called forth, how welcome must have been a work on theology which plainly and exhaustively treats its subject without incongruous metaphors, and useless digressions, and fierce invectives, and how "Le Livre de la Fréquente Communion" marks an epoch in the theological literature of France.*

The Petrus Aurelius of St. Cyran had been a great professional triumph; but the "Fréquente Communion" was at once seized upon by all classes of society. Sixteen bishops and twenty doctors hastened to testify their approbation of a doctrine which must be that of every church, where the moral sentiment is not wholly corrupt. In less than a fortnight, the first edition was exhausted. Six editions were published in five years; and eleven other prelates added

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 239. Du Fossé, p. 52. Besoigne, vol. v. p. 361. St^e. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 166.

their testimony to the practical value of the book. Many of the penitents who, in subsequent years, were attracted to Port Royal, attributed their conversion to its influence. And long after the Jansenist Controversy had run its weary course into the eighteenth century, the treatise continued to be reprinted as an aid to sound morals and true devotion.*

Although Arnauld had carefully abstained from making any reference to the Society, or to the Père de Sesmaisons, the Jesuits soon took the alarm, and within a few days after the publication of the book, one Père Nouet made the pulpit of their church of St. Louis resound with his denunciations of it. He forgot that he was advertising the book against which he declaimed; for before his sermons were finished, the announcement of the second edition was affixed to his church doors. All Paris flocked to hear him, yet no one could divine the reason of the clamour; for, as the Maréchal de Vitri sagaciously remarked, "There must be a snake somewhere hidden in the grass, for the Jesuits were never so excited when only the glory of God was at stake." Another hearer, Le Bouthillier, Archbishop of Tours, was greatly astonished at Nouet's impudence, for the Jesuit had himself written the testimony in favour of the book to which the Archbishop had set his name. And presently the bishops, who had made themselves responsible for Arnauld's doctrine, interfered; and at an assembly of their order, held in November of the same year, compelled Nouet, accompanied by four of his associates, to sign a recantation of his injurious statements, kneeling and bareheaded. The Society perforce acquiesced, and prepared for fresh warfare.†

To enter upon all the details of the literary controversy which ensued could answer no good purpose, and would only encumber our pages with the titles of long-forgotten

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 241. Besoigne, vol. v. p. 363.

† Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 240, 241. Besoigne, vol. v. p. 366. Du Fossé, p. 55.

pamphlets. The two most redoubtable combatants who descended from the Jesuit camp into the field, were Père Petau, known to the learned world as Petavius, the opponent of Scaliger in his chronological theories, and the Prince de Condé, who stooped to mingle in the fray. To the former, Arnauld replied in a work entitled "La Tradition de l'Église," which consists merely in a string of quotations from the Fathers, translated by Le Maître; in regard to the latter, he maintained the respectful silence which is, perhaps, the fittest answer to a prince of the blood who turns theologian. More noteworthy than this polemical squabbling, was the attempt of the Jesuits to compass by intrigue what they could not effect by argument, Arnauld's silence. They prevailed upon the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, and the inexperience of her new minister, Cardinal Mazarin, to issue an order, by which Arnauld and his supposed partner in the composition of the book, M. de Barcos, were commanded to repair to Rome, to give an account of their doctrine to the Holy See. Arnauld, fired with controversial success, and, as usual, chivalrous in the defence of truth, was willing to obey; but on the eve of setting out, found that his intended companion had more prudently gone into hiding. De Barcos alleged that he had secret information, that the dungeons of the Roman inquisition were open to receive him; but whether this were so or not, it is not the only occasion on which we shall find him acting, to say the least, more discreetly than his uncle would have done in a like case. There seemed, however, no course open but to follow his example; for, at this juncture, the Port Royalists believed that the uncle's mantle had fallen upon the nephew, and implicitly accepted his leadership.* So Arnauld entered upon the first of those long periods of invisibility, which

* Besoigne, vol. v. p. 368, *et seq.* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 267, *et seq.* St. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 177, *et seq.*

surrounded his untiring literary activity with an air of mystery, and gave his books the charm which belongs to all surreptitious pleasures.* Sometimes his concealment was more apparent than real; as from 1648 to 1656, when he made one of the brotherhood of Port Royal des Champs; at others, and especially in his latter years, the search for him was active, and his situation, had he been found, might have been perilous. But persecution under Anne of Austria was not what it became, when the narrow heart of Louis XIV., made more narrow by old age, was swayed by Le Tellier and Madame de Maintenon. A pious and self-denying life was, as yet, held to balance any severity of doctrine which might border on the heretical. "The Queen," said Mazarin once, "is admirable in this affair of the Jansenists. When one speaks of them in the general, she wishes to exterminate them all; but when I design to ruin any one of them in particular, and say that it is necessary to begin, for instance, with M. d'Andilly, she cries out at once, that they are too honest folk and too good servants of the King to be so dealt with."*

The Cardinal's attempt to refer the heresies of Frenchmen to the tribunal of the Holy See soon roused all the zeal which was ever ready to kindle for the liberties of the Gallican Church, and he was compelled to rescind the order, and to allege his own inexperience as an excuse for having issued it. And now, as the author of the obnoxious book was not to be enticed to Rome, the book itself was made the subject of judicial inquiry. The bishops, who had signed testimonials in its favour, wrote to Urban VIII., appealing to him for a decision between themselves and its detractors. The Jesuits, on the other hand, adroitly called the attention of the Pope to a sentence clumsily introduced into the preface by De Barcos, to the effect that "St. Peter and St. Paul are the two heads of the church, who are yet

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 268.

but one," and insinuated that the supremacy of Peter was here distinctly impugned. The friends of the book sent an agent to Rome, one Bourgeois, who has left a circumstantial account of the visits which he paid to bishops, and cardinals, and high officials, and even to the Pope himself; of the arguments which he used, and the objections which he refuted. The result of all was, that the book was not condemned, while the obnoxious sentence in the preface was declared heretical only in a sense which the author protested was not his own. This the Port Royalists, not without justification, regarded as a victory; and the controversy died away, leaving the Jesuits discomfited, but more than ever prepared to avenge themselves upon Port Royal and the Arnaulds whenever occasion served.*

For a time we have almost lost sight of the personages about whom gathered the first interest of our narrative,— La Mère Angélique and her nuns. Their story, during the years occupied by St. Cyran's imprisonment and the controversy of the "Livre de la Fréquente Communion," though empty of striking incidents, is not without importance, as showing the gradual development of that individuality of faith and spirit which involved them at last in persecution and ruin. La Mère Agnès held the office of abbess during two triennial periods, from 1636 to 1642, when her place was taken by Angélique, who, in virtue of four successive elections, governed the community from 1642 to 1654. The close connexion between Port Royal and the Arnauld family still continued. In November, 1646, Angélique writes to her brother, M. d'Andilly, of three of his daughters who were boarders in the house, — "Your daughter Charlotte wishes to take the veil on the festival of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin. . . . . She is the tenth of our name who has given herself to God in this

* Besoigne, vol. v. p. 387, *et seq.*

house. I pray God that the other two may make up the dozen."* Antoine Arnauld, the father of this numerous family, was buried at Port Royal des Champs. We have seen how his widow, long a professed nun, died at Port Royal de Paris in 1641. Five of their daughters had adopted the monastic life, of whom one, Sœur Marie Claire, died in 1642. The remaining daughter, Madame le Maître, took the veil in 1644, as soon as the death of her husband released her from her engagements with the world. Of their sons, M. d'Andilly retires to Port Royal des Champs in 1646; Henri, Abbé de St. Nicholas, is zealous in forwarding the interests of the community at Rome, and in 1650 is consecrated Bishop of Angers in the convent church; and Antoine is bound, during the whole of a long life, to the service of the sisterhood. All of Madame le Maître's five sons are more or less closely connected with Port Royal; and three of them—Le Maître, De Sericourt, and De Saçi—are among the most conspicuous of its adherents. And this long list is concluded by the children of D'Andilly, five of whose daughters took the veil, and whose third son, De Luzançi, died a hermit at Port Royal des Champs. We almost cease to wonder at the unity of spirit which pervaded Port Royal through all its changes of fortune, when we thus trace the ties of blood, and, doubtless, of natural similarity of character, which bound together its foremost administrators and defenders. And when the time of trouble came, it is easy to conceive that Angélique and Antoine Arnauld felt that they had to care not only for the maintenance of their own self-respect, but for the memory of a past, and the reputation of an advancing generation.†

St. Cyran's imprisonment was deeply felt at Port Royal. Not even Singlin's judicious guidance, aided as he was, before long, by the advice of the prisoner, could supply

* Lettres de la Mère Angélique, vol. i. p. 319.

† Mém. pour servir. part i. relation xii. vol. ii. pp. 1, *et seq.*

the loss of the great confessor's personal instructions. "What extremely consoles and strengthens me," writes Angélique to La Mère de Chantal, "is that all who had the happiness of being directed by him (who are but few, for he always kept himself in the back-ground, and was reluctant to undertake the charge of penitents), think only of praying to God, and of practising what he taught them."* But she was not always so moderate of speech. One day she received a visit from Richelieu's niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, and her pent-up indignation broke forth. She disdained to intercede for one whom she believed innocent. "Madame," she cried, "there are who are prisoners in time, who shall be free and happy in eternity; and, on the other hand, there are who are free, and powerful, and happy in time, who shall be bound, and enslaved, and wretched in eternity."† And when the blow of St. Cyran's death followed close upon the joy of his liberation, she could find no words for the great grief which possessed her soul, except the utterance of the simplest, yet profoundest, faith in Providence. "God is in heaven," she repeated, "God is in heaven."‡

It was at first believed that the community would be subjected to an interrogatory by M. de Laubardemont. Then the archbishop announced his intention of personally inquiring into the truth of the injurious reports current against the convent; but this also was postponed from year to year. At last, in 1644, a formal visitation was made by the officials of the diocese. The consternation among the sisterhood was great. The controversy about Arnauld's book on Communion was in its first heat; and the visitors were known to be at least not friendly to Port Royal. But after a long and close inspection, the result was a most favourable testimony, both to St. Cyran's prin-

* Lettres, vol. i. p. 144.

† Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 325.

‡ Ste. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 301.

ciples of direction and to their practical effect upon the condition of the community. "We find here," say the visitors in their report, "only virtue, piety, and even sanctity." So that in 1646 the archbishop condescended to pronounce his benediction upon the first stone of a new convent church, which, two years afterwards, he solemnly consecrated. It was not large, and, according to the usage of Port Royal, sparingly decorated. The community and their friends looked upon it as one of the most beautiful churches of the city; their enemies contrived, notwithstanding the archbishop's approval, to find a likeness between it and the Huguenot "Temple" at Charenton.*

The funds for this erection had been obtained by the final transference of the establishment of the St. Sacrément to Port Royal. And here a somewhat tedious episode in the history of the community is at last brought to a close. Henri Arnauld, the future Bishop of Angers, negotiates the transference at Rome; the archbishop gives no unwilling consent. Some slight alteration is made in the rule and the dress of the sisterhood; the black scapulary of the Bernardines replaced by a white one with a scarlet cross on the breast; and good Madame Bardeau's legacy applied to build the new church. The administration of the convent seems to have undergone little change; and perhaps the new scapulary was to the sisters themselves the most important part of the matter.†

A point which deserves a more careful examination is the way in which Port Royal now began to form social connexions with the great. We have already seen something of Madame de Guemené's visits hither for purposes of piety. A word may be said of the precise meaning and moral value of those "retreats," which form a character-

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 247, 595, 597. Lettres de la Mère. Ang. vol. i. p 367.

† Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 247, 596. Besoigne, vol. i. p. 278.

istic feature of the religious life of Catholicism, when I come to speak of the solitaries of Port Royal. It is enough now to remind the reader that a convent has often two points of contact with the world outside: first, its boarders, girls who receive their education in it, whether intended for the monastic life or not; and then its penitents, who retire for a few days or weeks into silence and seclusion, to reflect upon follies past, and to gather up resolution for future amendment. A curious link between Port Royal and a very different scene, the court of Charles II., is supplied by the fact that La Belle Hamilton*, known to us by Lely's languishing portrait, to her contemporaries as the sister of Antony Hamilton and the wife of the all-accomplished Count de Grammont, was a pupil in the convent. Her parents were among the English nobility who had followed the Stuarts into exile†, and her education, as well as that of the daughters of Lord Muskerry, had been entrusted to La Mère Angélique.‡ And about 1640, the Marquise de Sablé, a lady whose connexion with Port Royal and its literature deserves a more elaborate treatment than can be accorded to it in this place, joined Madame de Gueméné for a brief season, not suspecting perhaps that a few years later the monastery was to afford her a refuge from the ills of life, and a humble place in the memories of men.§ Another lady, who occupies no

* She was the daughter of Sir George Hamilton, by his wife Mary, third daughter of Walter, Viscount Thurles. Her paternal grandfather was James Hamilton, first Earl of Abercorn.

† In a letter to the Queen of Poland, dated July 11, 1647, Angélique says, "J'estime votre Majesté heureuse d'être dans un royaume paisible. Outre nos misères nous participons encore à celle de l'Angleterre, y ayant ici une grande quantité d'Ecossois et d'Anglois si miserable qu'ils font une extrême pitié."

‡ Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 388. Du Fossé, p. 488.

§ It is singular that M. Victor Cousin, in his charming volume on Madame de Sablé, makes no mention of her first retreat to Port Royal about 1640.

mean position in the conventual annals, is the Marquise d'Aumont, the widow of a distinguished officer, Charles d'Aumont, who retired from the world to spend the remnant of her life in prayer and self-denial, and her great wealth in works of charity. She made large gifts to religious houses; she furnished many young girls with sums of money which enabled them to enter convents, or to settle respectably in the world. She was chiefly instrumental in relieving Port Royal from the load of debt which weighed upon it. Many buildings in either monastery owed their existence to her liberality. And when she died, in 1658, all she asked in return was that she should be buried like a professed nun, though acknowledging herself unworthy of the honour, and that in the prayers for the repose of her soul, the words "our sister" should always follow her name.*

A greater lady than any of these, Louise Marie de Gonzaga de Clèves, Princess of Mantua, formed, in 1643, a connexion with Port Royal, which ended only with her life. Her name indicates the mixed origin of the family from which she sprang. The French county or duchy of Nevers, had been held (to pursue the genealogy no further) by Philippe le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy, from whose family it had passed through a female to the Dukes of Cleves. Another heiress had transferred it to the Gonzagas, dukes of Mantua, a younger branch of which house held it till 1627, taking their place among the nobility of the French kingdom.† Then the extinction of the older line placed the Nevers family in possession of Mantua, and

Yet the conventual memoirs are positive and explicit on the point. Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 236.

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. pp. 247, 597. Besoigne, vol. i p. 395. Nécrologe de l'Abbaye de P. R. p. 487.

† The duchy of Nevers was finally bought by Cardinal Mazarin for one of his nephews, the Mancinis. The last Duc de Nivernais, Louis Jules Mancini, died in 1798.

elevated Louise Marie and her sister Anne to the rank of princesses. In 1643, Louise was twenty-two, Anne seventeen years of age; and each destined to a chequered lot. The former became the wife of the two last kings of Poland, of the Jagellon family; the latter married a prince of the Bavarian Counts-Palatine; mingled, under the name of the Princess Palatine, in all the wars and intrigues of the Fronde; and now perhaps founds her best claim to the remembrance of posterity on the fact that the oration which Bossuet pronounced over her grave is a masterpiece of sacred eloquence.

The Princess Louise Marie came to Port Royal only a few days before St. Cyran's death, intending to put herself under his guidance. Not many months previously she had been affianced to Cinq Mars, the young and brilliant favourite of Louis XIII., the detection and punishment of whose conspiracy against himself had been Richelieu's last act. It is not wonderful then that her lover's sudden downfall and untimely fate should have driven her for consolation to St. Cyran's wise instructions; but she never saw him; and might perhaps have fallen back contentedly into the old thoughtlessness, had not Angélique tried upon her the spell of her personal influence. For a year or two she lived much at Port Royal, by turns occupying a very humble lodging in the convent, and attempting to enforce something like religious decency and order in her Parisian household. Still, she was not able to withstand the usual temptation of princesses; for in 1645 came an embassy from Ladislaus Sigismond, king of Poland, asking her in marriage: an embassy, glorious with a half-barbaric magnificence, casting all the splendours of the French court into the shade. The glittering bait was eagerly seized; she did not even wish to see the portrait of her intended husband, for she was wedding, she said, not himself but his crown; she was married in the chapel of the

Palais Royal, by the bishop of Warsaw, taking precedence for the nonce even of the queen of France, whose subject she had been; and so set off for Poland, carrying with her many fond doubts and wishes from Port Royal. In truth, her troubles were but beginning. Her husband died in 1648. His half-brother, John Casimir, the last of the Jagellons, doffed the Jesuit's cassock and the Cardinal's hat, to canvass the suffrages of the diet; by help of his sister-in-law was elected king; and in the next year, 1649, repaid the obligation by once more making her Queen of Poland.* But her second marriage, inasmuch as it had been dictated rather by policy than by affection, was probably not happy. None of her children survived their infancy; John Casimir's reign forms no quiet episode in the stormy epic of Polish history; external war and civil discord tore the land in pieces; and the Queen must often have thought that she had done ill to exchange peace at Port Royal for endless trouble in Poland. At last, in 1667, she died, and in the following year her husband, always inconstant and eccentric, threw away his crown in disgust, hastened to France, the country which he had always loved, donned once more his ecclesiastical garb, and till his death, in 1672, figured in French society as the Abbé de Saint Germain des Près, and the friend of Ninon de l'Enclos.† How wide the interval between

* That the marriage was not altogether popular at the time, the following doggrel, current at the time, sufficiently shows :. Casimirus Rex, germanâ sorore natus, germani conjuge copulatus, numquam erit fortunatus.

† A report was current that a few months before his death, John Casimir had married the widow of the Maréchal de l'Hôpital. This explains the point of the following lines, which indicate besides the popular estimate of his character :

Du feu roi de Pologne
Monsieur, que dites vous ?
Sans sceptre et sans vergogne,
Il vécut parmi nous.

Port Royal and Ninon, covered by the loves and friendships of this single life!

But neither her outward magnificence nor her inward wretchedness prevailed upon the Queen of Poland to forget Port Royal. So long as Angélique lived an active and intimate correspondence was carried on. The letters of the faithful friend and monitor were carefully preserved by the Queen, and form perhaps the most important part of the collection published in 1742, and one of our best authorities for the history of Port Royal. It is pleasing to see with what a frank and truthful respect Angélique treats her royal correspondent. In old days she had never scrupled to assert her authority over her high-born and perhaps somewhat unmanageable penitents. "I must go and separate our ladies," * she said once, "for they spoil one another. A fashion, a head-dress, a collar, is sure to intrude on some pretext or other upon their talk." So in these letters, she speaks distinctly but kindly, of the peculiar duties and temptations of royalty, and especially bids the Queen to do what she can to alleviate the distresses brought upon the kingdom by endless wars and dissensions. In this respect her advice appears to have been followed, for the royal lady's boundless charities were made a subject of remonstrance with her. "Never mind," she replied, "however poor I may be in my widowhood, La Mère Angélique will take me in at Port Royal des Champs." But Angélique, when she heard of it, and it was said how glorious a thing it would be to receive a Queen into the sisterhood, wisely prayed that the diffi-

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Oui, mais son inconstance,
Moine, roi, cardinal,
Le fit venir en France,
Mourir à l'Hôpital.

* Madame de Gueméné, Madame de Sablé, and the Princess of Mantua. Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 242.

culty and responsibility of such a penitent might be spared her.*

The constant increase in the number of nuns at Port Royal de Paris at last furnished Angélique with a sufficient pretext for a change which she had long desired to make; the re-occupation, namely, of Port Royal des Champs by a portion of the community. Her conscience had never quite acquiesced in the removal to Paris: she hardly thought it consistent with the true monastic character to fly from God's dispensations, even in the shape of fevers and pleurisies: and a remark of St. Cyran's that "true worship was as possible in the infirmary as in the church, and that no prayers were more agreeable to God than those which ascended from the midst of suffering,"† had sunk deeply into her heart. She had therefore always clung to the old house in the valley, and in her greatest pecuniary straits had steadily refused to sell the carved work of the stalls and other portions of the building, for which advantageous offers had been made. At last, in 1647, she obtained from the Archbishop and the Queen the permission which she had previously asked in vain, and prepared to lead back a colony to the ancient home of faith, which was now, thanks to the Solitaries, who had dwelt there for some years, thoroughly drained and made habitable. Seven professed nuns and two lay sisters, accompanied by the abbess herself, were to form the new community, which was to be in every respect one with the larger establishment in Paris, to be governed by the same constitutions, and subordinated to the same superior. Great was the grief of those who were left behind. Port Royal des Champs was, in some sort, a sacred place to them all, and was now to be the chief residence of their

* Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 240, *et seq.*; vol. ii. p. 385. Besoigne, vol. i. p. 204. Lettres de la Mère Angélique, *passim*; St^e. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 202.

† Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 2.

beloved abbess. She tried to console them as best she could. "Why do you grieve, sisters?" she said, when the moment of parting arrived, "ought we not to do God's will gaily, and with a good grace?"

It was on the 13th of May, 1648, that the little company set out for Port Royal des Champs; where they arrived in the afternoon of the same day. The conventual buildings had been completely repaired; some of the hermits had retired to Les Granges, a farm upon the hill; others were about to repair to a house which had been taken for them at Paris. First the bells, pealing from the church tower, announced that the new comers had set foot on the lands of the monastery. Then a great concourse of poor people were assembled in the courtyard to greet them; many of them old enough to recollect the charity which in former years had been dispensed by the girl abbess, who was now returning to them, a grave and long-suffering woman. They threw themselves at her feet and upon her neck, embracing her with tears of joy, and thanking God for having restored to them, their "good mother." Next, at the church porch, the Solitaries, headed by one of their ecclesiastics bearing a cross, waited to follow the nuns in solemn procession into the church, where they swelled the joyful Te Deum with their voices Here they parted; in a few days more the rule of monastic seclusion was strictly enforced, and Les Granges was as completely cut off from Port Royal des Champs as it had been from Port Royal de Paris. And Angélique felt that she was once more in her right place, at the head of the house which God had intrusted to her, and which was consecrated to her and her companions, by so many tender and holy associations.*

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 1, *et seq.* Lettres de la M. Ang. vol. i. pp. 351, 371.

III.

WHILE Angélique Arnauld was meditating a return to Port Royal des Champs, and Antoine was striking his first blow in the polemical lists, the little brotherhood which Le Maître and De Sericourt had established in the court-yard of Port Royal de Paris was expanding, notwithstanding many discouragements, into a numerous and powerful community, which, though bound by no laws, and professing allegiance to no fixed rules, became almost unconsciously the representative of a peculiar theological theory, and the defender of a schismatic church policy. In the Messieurs de Port Royal, so called from their temporary residence at the deserted monastery, and their close connexion with its nuns, centres the chief religious and literary interest of my narrative. I am now about to undertake the difficult task of describing the various and almost heterogeneous elements of which this society was composed; the causes which drove its members from the world to a life of persevering austerity in this lonely and unhealthy valley; the order and severity of their self-imposed penances; the respect and admiration, as well as the fear and hatred, with which the outer world heard the news of their increasing numbers and unflagging zeal. Their efforts for the improvement of education, and the literary triumphs achieved by some of their number, will furnish matter for separate discussion.

That priests and soldiers, courtiers, lawyers, physicians, students should one by one desert their accustomed places in the world, renounce all social activity as incom-

patible with their eternal interests, and retire to make their peace with God by solitary self-mortification, is a phenomenon which Protestant readers will find it hard to understand, and harder still to justify. In its aversion to the monastic life, under any modification, Protestantism is at least theoretically true to a great Christian principle: that the kingdom of God is to be developed in the world, not apart from it; that no man has a right to evade the duties imposed upon him by his social and domestic position; that we must fight the battle of our salvation in the post where God has placed us, if we would not incur the penalties of cowardice. Nor can we doubt that Protestant sympathy would have been all on the side of Le Maitre's friends, when they urged upon him, as religious arguments against his retirement from the bar, the example to be set by a truthful and conscientious lawyer; the value of his advocacy to the wronged and distressed; the loss to his mother and brothers of his advice and assistance. To those who take a healthy view of life's obligations, the picture of the Christian advocate, keeping his conscience clear of legal chicanery, consecrating his abilities to the defence of every good cause, and discharging wisely and manfully a husband's and a father's duties, is far more attractive than that of the solitary waiter upon God, however steadfast in austerity, however rapturous in devotion, however ardent in humility. It is even possible to doubt, whether the anxiety for eternal safety, which bids a man neglect all social duty, and concentrate all the strength and every moment of existence upon the state of his own soul, be anything better than a most insidious and most dangerous form of selfishness. And yet in spite of all this, we cannot fail to admire the persistent strength of will, the deep persuasion of spiritual realities, which moulded the lives of these solitaries. Of the majority of them it may be truly said, that neither the disappointment of worldly ambition drew their

thoughts from earth to heaven, nor the weariness of sinful pleasures drove them to the excitement of devotion. The call to repentance came to them in the midst of their secular life; and not having learned the higher wisdom, which converts the scene of men's ordinary trials and duties into the vineyard of God, they listened and fled into the wilderness.

But not all to live and die there. We shall find examples at Port Royal, as elsewhere in the France of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of temporary "retreats," as they were called, within the walls of religious houses, for the purpose of deliberate retrospect and renewal of life. The practice is easy to defend from the point of view of Christian expediency. The necessity of self-examination is enforced by all moralists; and those who know how hard it is to find fit opportunity for this duty amidst the hourly distractions of active life, will appreciate the advantage to be derived from a brief sojourn in a monastery, where the silence, the solitude, the holy associations of the place, all invite to serious reflection, and where regular discipline and judicious advice combine to deepen the first solemn impressions. Accordingly, we find that it excites little remark in the salons of Paris when a gay courtier, a successful soldier, still less when a great lady, disappears for a time into penitential seclusion. A friendly connexion, prolonged through several generations, was often established between a noble family and some religious house, which received valuable protection and liberal benefactions in exchange for occasional hospitality. Such was the connexion between the ladies of the great house of Longueville and the Carmelite convent in the Rue St. Jacques.* The abuses of this practice in a more profligate age than that of Richelieu and Mazarin sufficiently show to what extent it had been inwrought with the fabric of French society. It is easy to

* V. Cousin. Madame de Longueville, p. 81.

pass from the genuine alternation of repentance and transgression to that of wilful, open-eyed vice, and the formal humiliation which is designed to atone for it. Thus English readers are familiar with the way in which James II. vibrated between his priests and his mistresses; how the lover of Arabella Churchill and Catherine Sedley bequeathed his heart to the nuns of Chaillot.* Thus the Duchesse de Berri, the most profligate child of the profligate regent, with whose name are connected unmentionable scandals, and whose recorded excesses are to be paralleled only in the story of Roman empresses, repaired from time to time to a Carmelite convent, where she performed the offices of the church with such groans and tears of piety, that the sisters might have believed her a saint, if they had not known her to be the most shameless of sinners.†

It was near the close of the year 1639 when Le Maître and De Sericourt, after a sojourn of fifteen months at Ferté Milon, returned to the solitude of Port Royal des Champs, whence they had been expelled soon after St. Cyran's imprisonment. They were accompanied by M. Vitart, the honest citizen with whom they had lodged, and who now, till his death in 1641, shared the religious exercises of his former guests, and collected the revenues of the abbey for the sisterhood in Paris. Of the other members of the original brotherhood, Singlin was in Paris, attempting to supply the place of his imprisoned master; and Lancelot had been sent for a year to the Abbey of St. Cyran.‡ And the first penitent whom St. Cyran sent to join Le Maître and De Sericourt was Charles de la Croix, or, as he is usually called in the Memoirs, "Charles the Shoemaker." He was a poor, deformed youth, nephew of a turnkey at Vincennes, who had made himself remarkable among his

* Mémoires de St. Simon, vol. vi. p. 50.

† St. Simon, vol. xxvi. p. 57.

‡ Lancelot, vol. i. p. 125, 128.

comrades, first, by frequent fasts and self-imposed penances, and then, when his master had died, leaving a widow and children destitute, by working day and night to supply their needs. The uncle, astonished at the phenomenon, told the tale to St. Cyran, who sent for the young man, gave him religious instruction, and finally advised him to quit the world for Port Royal des Champs. How he could better work out his salvation than by labouring for the widow and orphans, or how they fared in his absence, we are not informed; but at Port Royal he set the first example of combining manual labour with religious exercises and meditations. He took charge of the bolting-room at the convent-mill, as well as plied his craft for the benefit of his companions. Perhaps from his industry arose the tale which the Jesuits eagerly propagated, that the hermits of Port Royal spent their time in making sabots, or wooden shoes, a tale which being repeated to the Abbé Boileau*, soon after the publication of the "Provincial Letters," called forth the untranslateable witticism, "Je ne sais si M. Pascal a fait des souliers; mais je sais qu'il vous a porté de bonnes bottes." The poor shoemaker was the first of many victims to the austerities of Port Royal, and died in 1643, in his twenty-sixth year.†

In March, 1641, a second recruit reached the valley in the person of Étienne de Bâcle, a native of the town of Martel in Querçi. He was one of nine brothers and sisters, children of a country gentleman, who lived on his little estate. His early history is as tragic as if he had sprung from the loins of some old Greek king, ruling over his half-wild subjects in a rough Cyclopean palace. Three of his brothers were found dead in their cradles, secretly killed by an old hag, who afterwards confessed that her

* Brother of the poet, Boileau Despréaux.

† Lancelot, vol. i. p. 340; vol. ii. p. 128.

motive was to procure infants' fat, for some purposes of foul incantation. De Bâcle escaped her clutches, and grew to manhood; of a grave and serious disposition, continent himself, and full of hatred of incontinence. In 1630, he married a wife, who was proud, beautiful, and rich; but unchaste both in heart and life. She had admitted more than one lover to her bed, and was six months gone with child at the time of her marriage. But her shame was her own secret; she was daring as well as bad: she persuaded her relations that the change in her appearance proceeded from another cause, and secretly resolved to stifle her infant at the moment of its birth. But the pains of labour fell upon her unexpectedly, and frustrated her design, though she had yet the impudence to declare that her husband was the father of the child. This allegation he was fortunately able to disprove conclusively; and a suspicion of very distant relationship between himself and his wife being verified, he succeeded, in spite of determined opposition on the part of her friends, in procuring a divorce. But this was only after many delays, and numerous appeals from court to court. Day by day he was compelled to endure the insults of this shameless woman; twice he was the mark for the pistols of her emissaries; once she bribed a physician to poison him. But in the deepest agonies of the sickness thus caused, he had a wonderful vision of the flames of hell, and the tormenting demons, from whose hands he was rescued by the Virgin; and from that moment thoughts of penitential retirement began to occupy his mind.

The divorce was finally pronounced in 1635, and De Bâcle, whose property had been consumed in the suit, came to Paris, to try to turn his talents to account. Here he met with St. Cyran, who endeavoured to find him a situation as tutor to some young nobleman; but, as his

custom was, spoke no word of religion to one who came to him only for worldly help and advice. A pupil was found, whom De Bâcle accompanied to Bourdeaux. Here, notwithstanding his previous experience, he was on the point of marriage with a rich widow, when her sudden death once more disconcerted his plans. In 1637, about the time of Le Maître's conversion, he again visited Paris, and, urged by some unexpected and secret impulse, implored St. Cyran to undertake the direction of his conscience. From this time forth he is a zealous and obedient disciple; at the time when St. Cyran is most strictly forbidden to receive the visits of his friends, he alone penetrates to his cell at Vincennes, to obtain final absolution at his hands; he eagerly joins the hermits in the valley of Port Royal, which long before he thought he had seen in some mysterious dream; he is cured of a fever, accompanied by horrible convulsions, which defied all medical treatment, by the touch of St. Cyran's corpse; and spends twenty laborious years in prayer and mortification, in the care of the sick, and the religious instruction of the young. Let us hope that he found at Port Royal the peace which domestic life denied him.*

The next comer was an Arnauld, Charles Henri de Luzançi, the third son of M. d'Andilly, and not yet in his twentieth year. He had been page in the house of Cardinal Richelieu, an appointment much coveted, as it was thought to lead to almost certain preferment in the army or the state. And Luzançi had already received his commission, and served a campaign with credit, when the prisoner of Vincennes snatched him out of the Cardinal's hands. There is nothing peculiar in the history of his conversion, except his youth, and the perseverance with

* De Bâcle's story is related by Le Maître in a special memoir, Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 173. Conf. Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 54, 253, 315. Fontaine, vol. i. p. 218.

which, for forty years, he clung to his new life. He undertook the whole management of the abbey lands, and in the consequent intercourse with the peasantry of the domain, showed himself the friend and protector of the poor. His assiduity in prayer was remarkable even at Port Royal. "His delight," says his epitaph, "was in prayer, which was his occupation when at leisure, his consolation when at work;" and it was noticed that as he rode about the estates on the business of his stewardship, his lips were constantly moving in silent devotion. The date of his arrival was June, 1642*, and in the subsequent year he was followed by a man of very different character, yet an apt companion and fellow-worker, M. Pallu. This was a gentleman of Touraine, once physician to the Compte de Soissons, a nobleman of the blood royal, who, in 1641, headed an armed rebellion against Richelieu, and was slain by an unknown hand, at the moment when he had defeated the king's troops, in the battle of Sedan. Intercourse with the great had not raised M. Pallu in his own esteem; his patron's unexpected death produced a deep impression on him; and he returned to his house in Touraine, steadily refusing any appointment like that which he had just held. But he soon found it almost impossible to carry his good resolutions into effect, while surrounded by the ordinary business and temptations of society, and went for guidance to St. Cyran. The advice which he received was confirmed by the perusal of the Livre de la Fréquente Communion, which soon after fell in his way; and a week after the master's death, he presented himself at Port Royal des Champs, asking admittance to the little society. "I am come to pass five or six days here," he said to Le Maître. "If it is not God

* Lancelot, vol. i. p. 337. Fontaine, vol. i. p. 363. Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 211. Nécrologe de P. R. p. 71.

that has brought you here," replied the latter, "you will not stay so long; if it is, you will remain here more than as many months." And in fact, he was soon established as the physician of the solitaries, and of the neighbouring villages, an office which he filled till his death in 1651. "He built," says Fontaine, "a snug cottage, which was afterwards called 'Le Petit Pallu,' on account of the smallness both of its rooms and of its master, who was little in every way, except in mind; little body, little house, little horse; but all well-proportioned, and very agreeable." It was almost a pleasure to fall ill, the enthusiastic narrator goes on to say, so delightful was the good doctor's conversation, and so different his manners from the dogmatic brutality of most physicians. And if we may judge from the tone of some half-jocose Latin verses in which he bade adieu to the world, M. Pallu taught his companions to temper piety with cheerfulness, and to practise austerity with a smile.*

We may pause at this point of our enumeration to inquire into the method of life which was established by common consent, especially as we possess a brief memoir, dated November 23rd, 1644†, which supplies us with the necessary information. Most of the conventual buildings had been dismantled on the removal of the nuns to Paris; but the church, in

* I quote the following passage from M. Pallu's "Vale Mundo," from Ste. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 222:—

. . . Intus et extra
Insurgunt hostes varii: phantasia nugax
Distrahit: illectans patriæ vox verberat aures:
Succensent chari, famam minitantur iniquam:
Indomitus latrat contra jejunia venter:
Sæpe favent oculi somno, lacrymasque recusant
Optatas precibus: nescit quoque lingua silere.

Fontaine, vol. i. p. 125; vol. ii. p. 253. Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 212. Besoigne, vol. iv. p. 7.

† Fontaine, vol. i. p. 130, *et seq.*

which mass was daily said by a chaplain left behind for that purpose, was still entire, and a few rooms in what had been the infirmary, furnished the first hermits with sufficient shelter. Their wants in the shape of furniture were simple: a stool, a table, a straw mattress, a crucifix, and a few books, were all they required for themselves; and the occasional visitors who interrupted their solitude gladly accepted their rude hospitality. They wore no distinguishing dress; each was clad as his custom had been in the world, though with a preference for simple fashions and grave coloured stuffs. Each went about his work, his devotions, his recreations, alone and silently; exchanging no more words than were necessary, and those only on topics of religion. The day began at 3 A.M., when one, whose charge it was, woke all the rest. After certain prescribed devotions had been performed in private, they met the chaplain in the church, to say matins and lauds, a service which occupied about an hour and a half. Then, kissing the earth in token of profound humility before God, each retired to his own room.

The round of social prayer, begun so early, lasted through the day. At half-past six was prime; at nine, tierces, after which mass was daily said; at eleven came sexte; at two, nones; at four, vespers; at a quarter past seven, compline and the Liturgy of the Virgin. Twice in the day a few moments were set apart for self-examination. A chapter in the Gospels, and another in St. Paul's Epistles, were daily read, kneeling. And the fulfilment of the apostolic injunction, "Pray without ceasing," was set before each as a constant object of desire: though in the word "prayer" were included not only the spoken wishes of the soul, but also its silent aspirations, and habitual desire of God's presence.

They found it impossible, at such a distance from the sea, to observe exactly the Church's regulations on the subject

of fasting; and consequently desired to make their daily mode of life as little like a feast as might be. For eight months in the year, they had only two meals in the day; dinner about noon, and at six a light meal that might be supposed to stand in place of supper. The dinner was a social meal, if such it can be called where no conversation was permitted. Every man had a portion allotted to him, as in a monastery; and one of their number read aloud from the New Testament and the Lives of the Saints. After dinner, a walk formed the sole recreation of the day, which each might take alone, or, if he pleased, with one other. Two hours in the morning, and two in the afternoon, were devoted to hand-labour, which consisted, for the most part, in such work in the fields and garden as was not too difficult for those who had been accustomed to sedentary occupations. As I have already said, the nuns of Port Royal found, on their return in 1648, that the labours of the Solitaries had converted the marshy wilderness from which they had fled, into a healthy and blooming valley. The frequency of confession and communion varied, according to the peculiar circumstances of individuals: some communicated only once a fortnight; others, on all Sundays and high festivals. The practice of austerity was left to the free will of each: fasts on bread and water, hair shirts, and "disciplines" (which, for Protestant readers, may be interpreted to mean scourges), were more or less assiduously used. The long list of premature deaths to be found in the annals of this community is sufficient proof that self-mortification was more than a name amongst them.

It was about this time that Fontaine, the author of the Memoirs from which we derive much of our knowledge of this society, came to Port Royal, a young man of some twenty years of age, who had been already used to hermits' fare, and who desired no better than to end his life as he had begun it. The son of a Parisian bourgeois, he had lost

his father when he was twelve years old, and had been confided by his mother to the care of M. Hillerin, curé of the parish of St. Merri. Among Hillerin's friends and parishioners was D'Andilly, who, in his usual character of mediator between the world and St. Cyran, introduced the curé at Vincennes. The result was Hillerin's resignation of his cure, and retirement to a little priory which he held in Poitou. Hither he was accompanied by young Fontaine, whom, however, he determined, after a few months, to place where he would have better opportunities of study, and so brought to Port Royal. The part which he will play in our future story is not very conspicuous. We shall find him aiding others in compiling and copying their writings; sometimes though rarely, venturing on a work of his own; always ready to take part in the labour of teaching, which, under every disadvantage, was never intermitted; and at last, in his seventy-second year, recording the remembrances of his youth in memoirs which, if showing something of the garrulity of old age, are always simple and truthful, full of genuine piety and a hearty admiration for the great men among whom his lot had been cast. His first impressions of Port Royal were, he tells us, somewhat gloomy. The uncultivated valley, rough with thorns and thistles, seemed to mourn the absence of its holy mistresses. The gardens swarmed with serpents. He received little word of welcome from the taciturn hermits, whose austerities appeared rude and almost savage. "Who is that man clothed in grey, who has a great faggot at his door, which I see him carrying sometimes?" he asked of De Bâcle, the first friend he made: and he was surprised to hear that this was the famous Le Maître, who would have no fire, and carried this faggot about to warm himself when he was cold.*

From this enumeration of the first solitaries of Port

* Fontaine, vol. i. *passim*; also p. 219.

Royal, it will be seen that the two men of the party who were active in controversy, namely Arnauld and de Barcos, were not there. Yet one Habert, in a Defence of the Faith of the Church, published in 1644, did not hesitate to say, that at Port Royal were "forty students, and forty able pens, all cut by the hand of the same master." * The current fiction was, that this nest of heretics held frequent conferences on matters of Catholic doctrine and discipline; and that a schism was being deliberately prepared in the very bosom of the Church. And those who were ready to believe so monstrous a misrepresentation of what was taking place within twenty miles of Paris, found their fears suddenly augmented, when in 1645, so well known a courtier as M. d'Andilly announced his intention of following his son's and his nephews' example. The project was not a new one with him. So long before as October 23rd, 1643, a few days, that is, after the death of St. Cyran, he had announced to his son Pomponne his determination to quit the world. He thought then that a few years' delay would enable him to wind up his affairs, and finally execute his resolution. But his leave-taking of society was a longer business than he anticipated. In 1644, he makes a brief stay at Port Royal, by way of experiment. Then in preparation for his coming, a room is repaired and furnished; and we who have seen penitents arrive without avant-couriers, and without preparation, begin to imagine that M. d'Andilly is about to practise retreat and austerity after a fashion of his own. At last, in 1645, he arrives; he is now fifty-seven years of age; and till his death, in his eighty-fifth year, he belongs only to us.

I have already said that the hermits were bound to the observance of no common rule; and, therefore, it is need-

* Gerberon, vol. i. p. 169. Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 215.

less to ask how far M. d'Andilly's life at Port Royal corresponded with that which I have described. He first directed the attention of the community to the draining and cultivation of the valley; and the inheritance of his eldest son, whom he neglected for his favourite Pomponne, suffered for his public spirit. He applied himself with great assiduity and success to gardening, and especially to the cultivation of fruit-trees. He spared no trouble or expense to procure the finest grafts; and many a basket of peaches and nectarines found its way from Port Royal to the queen's table, or testified to the great ladies of the court, that they were not forgotten by an old admirer.* Nor was his literary industry in the latter years of his life to be despised, as an edition of his works, published at Paris, in 1685, in eight folio volumes, may bear witness. He translated Josephus, preserving all the graces of the original, and adding others, which betray their Parisian birth. He gave a French version of the works of St. Theresa, and St. John d'Avila; as well as of Augustine's Confessions, and other less known writings of the Fathers. Perhaps the work which won for him most contemporary renown, was the "Lives of the Fathers of the Desert:" biographies, by different authors, of the Thebaid Hermits, which he collected and translated, and which, from their many points of similarity to life at Port Royal, long remained a favourite book in Jansenist households. Besides these, I have mentioned elsewhere his memoirs of his own life and family. Not inaptly, then, was this peaceful period of his life symbolised in the device which his friends placed be-

* Lancelot (vol. i. p. 127) tells us that Cardinal Mazarin was accustomed jocosely to call D'Andilly's peaches "des fruits benis." An interesting portrait of D'Andilly, by Philippe de Champaigne, in which he is represented as holding one of these "fruits benis" in his hand, was exhibited at the Art Treasures' Exhibition in Manchester in 1857. It is the property of Earl Spencer.

neath his portrait: a swan, sailing tranquilly upon a smooth lake, and chanting its dying song, with the motto, *Quam dulci senex quiete!*

D'Andilly will often again mingle in the active part of our story, for in less prosperous times than these, his knowledge of the world and his interest with the powerful were greatly in request. Yet perhaps we shall find no opportunity of trying to understand his somewhat mixed character so favourable as this. From his earliest years he had breathed the air of a court. First, he assisted one of his uncles, who was superintendent of finance under Henri IV.; then, after that king's death, had been accustomed, though holding no office, to stand behind the chair of the Queen-mother, and watch the transaction of business. More than once, he was within a little of obtaining high office in the State. Louis XIII. gave him the chance of buying a minister's portfolio, as the custom then was, for 100,000 livres. D'Andilly refused to buy what he thought was the just reward of his abilities, and the place was sold to another. For a time he devoted himself to Gaston, Duke of Orleans, the king's brother and presumptive heir; though here too he failed to establish himself on a firm footing of favour. Yet he was never unemployed; never encountered black looks at court. Louis XIII., Marie de Medicis, Anne of Austria, Richelieu, Mazarin, entertained him on terms of friendship, and bore patiently his freedom of speech. Perhaps a better guarantee for the real excellence of his character is the fact that when, in 1634, he accompanied an army into Germany as commissary-general, he made himself the idol of the soldiers, by the unusual consideration which he showed for their wants and sufferings. "Never mind if we are wounded," they said; "M. d'Andilly will take care of us." So to the end he never quite severed himself from the scene of his early hopes. The chief

worldly care of his last years was to watch his son, the Marquis de Pomponne, ascend the slippery ladder of state preferment, which he had himself vainly tried to climb. And in his eighty-second year he left Port Royal voluntarily, for the first time since his retirement, to thank Louis XIV. for having made Pomponne a minister of State.

The traces of D'Andilly which we find in the society of the time, equally show him a courtier and a man of the world. He is intimate with that famous côterie which meets at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. He corresponds on equal terms with the wits of the age. La Rochefoucauld sends to him, long after his retreat to Port Royal, the MS. of his Memoirs, to receive corrections of its style. He is chosen by Richelieu one of the original members of the Académie Française. He selects a basket of his finest nectarines for the famous Mademoiselle, the great heiress of Orleans, the would-be bride of Lauzun. Though passionately attached to the person and the memory of his wife, he is the Platonic lover of so facile a lady as Madame de Gueméné. "We used to attack the bonhomme D'Andilly," writes Madame de Sevigné*, "and tell him that he liked best to save souls which were in beautiful bodies." Yet even De Retz, his rival with Madame de Gueméné, allows that the flirtation was wholly Platonic. Tallemant, a bitter, snarling memoir writer of that day, admits his piety, at the end of a scornful estimate of his talents; and Madame de Sevigné does not even insinuate that his zeal for the salvation of souls was unreal. I can gather from all spoken or implied indications of D'Andilly's character only this: that he was a man of a frank and sympathetic disposition, who took the outward hue of the society in which he found himself; who pleased naturally, and without effort of his own, in the

* Letter of August 19, 1676.

court, the salon, and the cloister; whose manners the world preserved from the rudeness of the fanatic; whose life a genuine piety kept pure from the corruptions of the world. St. Cyran, who was assuredly not given to flattery, and who knew him well, writes of him: "It is true that he has not the virtue of a saint or an anchorite, but I know no man of his condition who is so solidly virtuous." Singlin said to Le Maître, that he regarded D'Andilly's retirement as the most signal proof of St. Cyran's evil opinion of the world. "You know as well as I," he said, "what M. d'Andilly is; his candour, his innocence, his virtue, his wise simplicity. If any one can live innocently in society, it is surely he." And I have before quoted that epigrammatic compliment paid to him by Balzac, which, if somewhat passing the truth in its denial of his vanity, may yet show how he was looked upon by one who stood outside of professedly religious circles: "M. d'Andilly is a man who, possessing the virtues both of a Christian and a moralist, is neither ashamed of the one nor vain of the other."*

M. d'Andilly continued throughout his life the patriarch of this community, reverenced by all, consulted on every point of importance; yet not the real head. Over a society like this the confessor must necessarily preside. So long as St. Cyran was in prison, Singlin filled this important post, though with much fainting of heart and uncertainty of will; so that when his master was set at liberty, his most ardent wish was to retire to the Abbey of St. Cyran, where one of his brothers was already a monk, and to spend the remainder of his days in seclusion. He met, however, with no sympathy from St. Cyran, who pressed upon him the argument that God had placed him where he was, and that to fly from the duties of his station would be to incur the

* Mémoires d'Arnauld d'Andilly, *passim*. Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 256, 281. Fontaine, vol. ii. p. 233, *et seq.* p. 185. Besoigne, vol. iv. p. 55, *et seq.* St^e. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 243, *et seq.*

guilt of disobedience. Again, when St. Cyran's death took away the arm on which he leaned in his difficulties, his unaffected humility prompted the design of retirement, which neither De Barcos nor Le Maître would suffer him to carry into effect. He divided his time, therefore, as well as he could, between the nuns at Paris and the hermits at Port Royal; and so long as the latter were few in number, the task was not beyond his strength. But the "Book of Frequent Communion," joined with his own preaching in the convent chapel, brought many penitents; the suspicion of heresy was beginning to attach to himself and to all who had recourse to him; while he was warned by the refusal of a Carthusian house to admit De Sericourt, who had wished to subject himself to that severe discipline, that Port Royal des Champs was the only safe refuge for his penitents. At last he chose as his assistant M. Manguelen, a former canon of Beauvais, who was now about to return to Port Royal, after the performance of a good work which Singlin had set before him. With some difficulty Manguelen, who had come as a penitent, was persuaded to undertake the direction of penitents; but the arrangement was hardly happily concluded, when, in 1646, the new confessor died.* In despair, Singlin now cast his eyes upon De Saçi, Le Maître's younger brother. But a name so distinguished in the annals of Port Royal demands a more formal introduction.

I have already mentioned the way in which Madame le Maître had placed her son Isaac le Maître de Saçi in the hands of St. Cyran, and the high hopes which the young man had excited in the latter's mind. He had been educated with Antoine Arnauld, than whom he was only a year younger, and had given early proof, not only of general capacity for learning, but of a talent for elegant literature.

* Fontaine, vol. ii. pp. 100, 195, 215, 226.

His biographers quote his youthful verses; but a translation of the Latin hymns of the Church into French verse, which he published in 1650, under the title of "Heures de Port Royal," and which reached a thirtieth edition, is perhaps more convincing evidence of his poetical abilities. From boyhood he was quiet, orderly, modest, docile, master of himself. But his modesty got the better of his docility when the time arrived that he should enter upon the theological courses of the Sorbonne. He felt a genuine aversion to the various public exercises which the candidate for a doctor's degree was required to perform, and shrank from taking upon himself the responsibilities of the priestly office. He appealed therefore to his brother Le Maître to win the consent of his family to this alteration of his plans, and, by help of St. Cyran, who loved to leave the souls under his charge to a natural course of development, succeeded in his object. In another wish, very near to his heart—that of joining his brothers at Port Royal—he was only partially gratified. For a few months he shared their devotions and their studies, and then returned to the house of St. Cyran, with whom and with De Barcos he remained for several years.

It is of this first visit to Port Royal that Le Maître tells the following anecdote, which, more than any description, will reveal to the reader the quiet self-mastery which was the centre of De Saçi's character. "Every evening," he says, "we had, as you know, a very modest collation; nevertheless, it afforded my brother De Saçi as much occupation as a grand supper. As for me, who am of a warm and quick disposition, I had seen the end of my portion almost as soon as the beginning; it rapidly disappeared; and as I was thinking only of rising from table, I saw my brother De Saçi, with his usual coolness and gravity, take a little piece of apple, peel it quietly, cut it leisurely, and eat

it slowly. He had hardly begun his supper, when mine was already more than half-digested. Then, after having finished his meal, he rose from table almost as light as he had sat down, leaving untouched nearly all of his very moderate portion. He went away as if he were quite satisfied, and even appeared to grow fat upon fasts."*

De Saçi's character and predilections naturally led him to the ecclesiastical profession, though he hesitated long before he took the last irrevocable step. For a time he pursued the necessary studies, under the care of M. Guilebert, curé of Rouville, whom we shall learn to know better in connexion with the family of Pascal. When "Action," Arnauld was compelled to conceal himself, De Saçi was the companion of his retreat, and the assistant of even at this labours. Stories are not wanting to show that his early period, his prudence and moral exactness were serviceable, in correcting the somewhat incautious zeal of the great controversial doctor. The removal of the nuns to Port Royal des Champs, in 1648, at last necessitated the appointment of a confessor, who should conduct the offices of the convent church, and take charge both of the hermits and the sisterhood. For this purpose, Singlin, more than ever full of labours, selected De Saçi. Although thirty-five years of age, he had never been ordained priest, and now took upon himself the sacred office only with heartfelt reluctance, and in obedience to his spiritual director. His consecration took place upon Quadragesima Sunday, December, 1648; and on the day of the Conversion of St. Paul, in the following January, he celebrated his first mass in the convent church of Port Royal des Champs. Before long he entered upon his duties as confessor.

* Fontaine, vol. i. p. 354.

The new director was not received by the solitaries with much enthusiasm. All were heartily sorry to lose Singlin, whose authority had been derived directly from St. Cyran, and on whose wisdom and gentleness they had long been accustomed to rely. Fontaine confesses, that he implored Singlin to leave him under the direction of Antoine Arnauld, who had come to Port Royal in 1648, and whose kindness had already won his heart. Others complained that De Saçi's manners were cold and unsympathising—that he did nothing to conciliate the confidence which they were invited to place in him. But the greatest difficulty was with Le Maître. Fifteen years of seclusion and maceration had not sufficed to tame his naturally warm and proud disposition. He could not resolve to put himself under the direction of a younger brother, whose character was, moreover, almost repugnant to his own. Perhaps the great orator, on whose lips the wit and beauty of Paris had been wont to hang, was unwilling to acknowledge the authority of an unknown student, new even to the responsibilities of his office. But Singlin conceived that the triumph of grace over nature would not be complete till Le Maître had made this last sacrifice of inclination and of pride. He recounted, with affectionate exultation, the many qualifications of De Saçi for his work, and urged upon Le Maître the remembrance of his yet uncorrected faults, and the help which he would derive from the quiet, equable strength of his brother's character. At last the examples of De Sericourt and Madame le Maître lent a persuasiveness not their own to Singlin's arguments. A brother might well accept a brother's authority, when a mother so far forgot the instincts of nature as to pour her confessions of sin and weakness into the ear of a son. Le Maître yielded, and was rewarded for his self-conquest by the growth of a tender friendship between himself and De Saçi. The example was soon fol-

lowed by all the inhabitants of the valley; and before long De Saçi's authority was universally acknowledged.*

This is not the time to pause and attempt to characterise his influence. At a later period, when all the great defenders of Port Royal have played their parts, and are one by one leaving the stage, it will be our duty to compare their excellences and their defects. Then we shall have watched through many a season of difficulty and distress, the growth of that saintly character, which so prevailed with the hearts of some, that they strained and broke when it was withdrawn from their love. Now De Saçi's first labour was to whisper the consolations of religion at bed-sides where his own eyes were dim with the tears of natural affection. First, Oct. 4th, 1650, De Sericourt sank under the austerities with which he wore away his life; leaving it in charge to his brothers, to distribute among the poor whatever portion of his property he had not already consumed in charity. Then Madame le Maître, who was now, at the close of a troubled life, a nun at Port Royal, fell beneath this last blow, and soon followed her favourite child. "My son," she said to De Saçi, on her death-bed, "God made use of me to give you a miserable life; now He designs, by means of you, to give me a life of endless felicity." And then turning to Antoine Arnauld, "What have I done for God, that he should have given me such a son?"†

During the years over which I have so lightly passed in describing the transfer of spiritual power from Singlin to De Saçi, the rude hermitages in the valley of Port Royal were becoming almost daily more numerous and more full.

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 108, 118, 297. Fontaine, vol. i. p. 309, *et seq.*; vol. ii. p. 355, *et seq.* Du Fossé, p. 103. Besoigne, vol. iv. p. 523, *et seq.* Ste. Beuve, vol. iii. p. 311.

† Fontaine, vol. ii. pp. 399, 405. Lettres d'A. Arnauld, vol. i. p. 43.

The list of those who came hither for a brief retreat is long. Now a bishop learns here the boundlessness of episcopal duty; now peers and statesmen enliven devotion by pleasant intercourse with their old comrade D'Andilly; now fashionable preachers fly from crowds and churches, to gain a fresh energy of speech by solitary communings with the desert. Nor were permanent settlers wanting. M de la Rivière d'Eragni, an old soldier, who had won in many fields a reputation for bravery, begins in 1645 to teach the younger disciples of the community how to conquer themselves. None so constant in self-mortification, none so laborious in fasts and watchings as he. The abbey woods were his peculiar care; there he loved to read, to meditate, and to pray. For a "*vieux mousquetaire*," he had many accomplishments; he was skilled in Italian and Spanish when he came to Port Royal, and there learned Hebrew and Greek, that he might read the Bible in the original tongues.* In 1648, he was joined by a worthy companion, M. de la Petitière, a gentleman of Poitou, supposed to be the best swordsman in France. He was attached to the household of Richelieu, who relied upon his prowess to repel any attacks that might be made upon his life. He was a man of a fierce, ungovernable temper; of whom it was said, that having a quarrel on hand, he kept a horse saddled in his stable for eight days and nights, that he might sally forth on the first news of his enemy. At last he killed a kinsman of the cardinal's in a duel; Richelieu had already signalised himself by his stern execution of the laws against duelling, and was not likely to be merciful in this case, so De la Petitière fled and hid himself. In his hiding-place he met with the book on communion, which had already made so many converts, and resolved to associate himself with the men who adopted its principles. In 1644, when the cardinal was

* * Du Fossé, p. 65. Besoigne, vol. iv. p. 46.

dead, he came to Port Royal for a time; then left it, that before making his final retreat, he might learn a useful handicraft. He bound himself apprentice to a shoemaker, steadily persevered for three years in this unwonted occupation, and returned to Port Royal to spend almost a quarter of a century in making shoes for the nuns, and his companions in retirement.* His history is to some extent reversed in that of another solitary, M. Baudri de St. Gilles d'Asson, who began life as an ecclesiastic and a holder of Church preferment, and ended it as the most active, adroit, and versatile agent of Port Royal, when Port Royal had become a party. The retirement of M. Hillerin, the friend of Fontaine, first touched him; the "Book of Frequent Communion" completed the work; and he came to Port Royal, and established himself in a little thatched hut, jestingly denominated the Palais de St. Gilles. Here he was first the carpenter, then the bailiff of the community; till, when troubled times came, he donned secular attire, hung a sword by his side, and went to Paris, to help Arnauld and Nicole in their frequent concealments; to set in motion the secret presses, from which issued the voluminous labours of Port Royal; to find unobserved access to powerful yet timid friends; in short, to practise the thousand evasions of authority which persecution at once necessitates and justifies. More than once his arrest and condemnation appeared inevitable; yet his good fortune and address never failed him; and when, in 1668, he fell a victim to the austerity which entered so largely into the conception of Christian excellence at Port Royal, he knew only the outside of King Louis' prisons, and had suffered less personal persecution than many of his less active and daring companions.†

* Du Fossé, p. 67. Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 217. Fontaine, vol. i. p. 121.

† Besoigne, vol. iv. p. 105. St°. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 280.

Such were the more prominent members of the hermit community, which, in 1648, joyfully welcomed the return of Angélique and her nuns to the valley. Of those who occupied the conventual buildings, some found a temporary abode in Paris; others retired to a farm called Les Granges, which lay high upon the hill side, and is still a place of pilgrimage to the worshippers of genius as the residence of Blaise Pascal. The inconveniences suffered by the new comers were, at first, great. The ruins had been imperfectly restored, the dormitories were insufficient, and the poverty of the community showed itself in the scanty provision of the most necessary furniture. But these things were looked upon by Angélique only as a trial of patience and charity, which might help to restore the best days of the old reform. She set herself diligently to work to improve the condition of the poor on the conventual estates. None who applied for help went empty away. She wrote with pride to Paris of a new receipt for a nourishing soup, which she had tried with success. She enlisted the solitaries in her service, and M. Pallu and his pony were soon well known in every neighbouring village. And before long, all that she could do, and far more, was needed to contend against the terrible wretchedness created in the neighbourhood of Paris by the first war of the Fronde."*

To try to unravel a distinct thread of historical narrative from the tangled web which the memoir writers have woven over that mad time—to trace the secret causes and the ostensible motives which produced civil war—to display the genuine political aspirations, and the personal predilections and animosities which lay at the bottom of this great imbroglio, and made French nobles shuffle and change sides, as often and as perplexingly as the characters

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. pp. 16, 21. Lettres de la M. Ang. vol. i. pp. 371, 401.

in a Spanish comedy — to define the element of female influence, which throws at least an apparent hue of romance over the fray — to collect the numberless epigrams and bon mots in which the mobile population of Paris half forgot their wretchedness — to tell why brave Condé fought for and against his king and cousin—how supple Mazarin bent his head, and went into exile, only to come back triumphant — and above all, to compare this with the civil war then drawing to its close in England, so wonderfully parallel in many external resemblances, so absolutely unlike in its deep religious and political earnestness — is a task which would lead us too far away from the more private interests which engross us. I must trust my readers to find for themselves the historical scenery which will help to make the action of our drama real and life-like. Something must be said of the Fronde, when we have to trace the eventful history of that great Frondeuse, the Duchesse de Longueville. But now the subject, however tempting, must not draw us aside from the straight path of our narrative; we have to do with the Fronde only as it affects Port Royal.

The 26th of August, 1648, was the famous Day of Barricades; famous not less for itself, than for the example which it has set to all subsequent Parisian revolutions. Before long the King and the Queen-mother had fled to St. Germains; the great Condé, fresh from his youthful victories at Rocroi, at Nordlingen, and at Lens, commanded the royal troops; while the parliament and population of Paris were preparing for a siege under Condé's brother, the Prince de Conti. For the great ones it was little more than a playing at war. Questions of place and precedence were still the only ones which could excite a living indignation in the mind of the French noble; and a successful witticism was the kind of victory which won the loudest applause. But the sufferings of the peasantry in

the neighbourhood of Paris, and of the common people within the besieged city, were frightful. The whole country was in possession of a lawless soldiery, who levied contributions as savagely as on an enemy's territory.* In a letter dated Port Royal des Champs, January 7th, 1649, and addressed to the *cellérière* of the house at Paris, Angélique gives a vivid picture of the wretchedness of the surrounding population. The soldiers thrashed out all the corn on the farms, and would not give the poor owners of the produce a single grain. All agricultural labour was suspended, for the horses had been pressed into the service of the war. One hundred and fifty persons were entirely dependent for subsistence upon the daily dole at the convent gate. One poor widow confessed that the pangs of starvation had so far overpowered the instincts of natural affection, that she had entertained the thought of killing her infant, for which she could no longer find food. Nor did the sisters fare much better than their tenants. They had no bread, either for themselves or to send to Paris, and were content with dried peas and milk. "God," says Angélique, "wishes to teach us to live like the poor. We shall be happy if He gives us grace to learn the lesson well."†

Again in April, she writes to the same sister: "We will do what we can, my dearest sister, to hire a horse to bring you the rest of the habits. For our own horses and asses are dead. Our wretchedness is very pitiful: war is a horrible scourge. It is a wonder that both human beings and animals have not perished through being shut up to-

* Tallemant des Réaux (Historiettes, vol. x. p. 82) tells a story of this period which speaks volumes for the state of the country. Vialart, Bishop of Chalons, was on a visitation. Catechising the peasants, he asked on one occasion, "Que faut-il faire pour se sauver?" The answer was, "Il faut se retirer dans le château quand les gens-d'armes venont."

† Lettres, vol. i. pp. 402, 403.

gether so long. We had horses both in our chamber and over against us in the chapter-house; and there were some forty cows, which belonged to us and our poor people, in a cellar. The court was quite full of hens and turkeys, ducks and geese; and when we were not willing to take any more in, they said to us, 'Take them for yourselves, if you will: we would rather you had them than the gens-d'armes.' Our church was so full of wheat, of oats, of peas and beans, of household utensils, and of all kinds of clothes, that we had to walk over them to get into the choir: the bottom of which also was filled with the books of our Messieurs. There were besides, ten or a dozen nuns who had taken refuge with us; all the female servants of the farms were inside, all the male labourers without; the farm buildings were full of wounded men: the press-room and the offices crowded with animals. In short, if it had not been for the great cold, I think that we should have had the plague. In other respects, the cold was an inconvenience; for our fuel ran short, and we did not dare to send into the wood for more.

"With all this, God has so helped us that we have not been down-hearted; and the extreme wretchedness of those poor folk, who in fear of their lives have taken refuge in the woods, has made us see that God is only too good to us. Everything here is beyond price, so great has been the pillage. In short it is very pitiful to see this poor country. I did not intend to have told you all this, but I was quite full of pity and concern, and so I have said it insensibly."*

At an early period of the siege of Paris, the exposed situation of the convent in the Fauxbourg St. Jacques had rendered it necessary for the community to seek shelter more in the heart of the city. The change was

* Lettres, vol. i. p. 416.

not effected without some difficulty, for the people of the Fauxbourg were unwilling to let them go. At last, on the 12th of January, 1649, a procession of thirty nuns, headed by La Mère Agnès, and accompanied by two magistrates, M. de Bernières and M. de Nain, arrived in safety at the place of refuge which the liberality of M. de Bernières had provided. Here, though they might feel safer than their sisters at Port Royal, they suffered greatly for want of the necessaries of life. On more than one occasion we read that a regular convoy of such provisions as Angélique could collect was escorted to Paris, with due military regularity, by some of the hermits. In them, indeed, some sparks of the old martial spirit had not ceased to glow. They repaired the walls of the convent, and kept regular watch and ward about its precincts. One of their number had formerly served with the Prince de Condé; and now obtained permission to wear the uniform of his guard, as a terror to marauders. Fortunately, their skill and courage were never brought to the test of actual combat. "We have always been surrounded," writes Angélique, "with the most cruel soldiery in the world, who have ravaged all this district with every kind of barbarity and sacrilege. But God, by his mercy, has preserved us." Perhaps, after all, the Abbess was the most effectual defence of Port Royal. She was harassed by a thousand cares and sorrows, and was moreover, at this very time, on the brink of the grave. "My life," she says, in the letter which I have just quoted, "is one long languishing: and although I am not confined to bed, and have no fever, I am gradually wasting away. . . . I am better just now; but I do not think that I can last long." Yet her benevolent care was for enemies as well as friends. A wounded soldier found food and tending at Port Royal as readily as a destitute peasant. The Christian precept

to love one's enemies, has rarely been more triumphantly vindicated.*

The first war of the Fronde had run its brief course before the end of 1649. In January, 1650, men's fears and passions were once more excited by the sudden arrest of the princes of the blood, De Condé and De Conti, and their brother-in-law, the Duc de Longueville; an arbitrary act, for which no better reason could be given than the jealousy and apprehension of Mazarin. When, after the lapse of a year, Condé regained his liberty, he requited the ingratitude of the court by once more kindling the flames of civil war; and this second combat, known by the name of the Princes' War, lasted till an end was put to the troubles of the Fronde in 1654. These were years of change and development at Port Royal; during which it strengthened itself by its alliance with powerful and liberal friends, who were able to serve the community in the world which they did not wholly abjure for its sake.

We have already heard of M. de Bernières, who gave up his house in Paris to the use of the nuns in the Faux-bourg. He was a native of Rouen, holding the office of Maître des Requêtes, and at the time of which we speak, a widower, whose children were being educated in the convent and the schools of Port Royal. Another widower, who held the same relation to the community, was M. du Gué de Bagnols, also a Maître des Requêtes of Lyons. M. de Bagnols had inherited from his father a large fortune, which however he looked upon as wholly or in part ill-gotten; and so resigned his office, and devoted himself and his wealth to works of charity. His annual income

* Lettres de la M. Ang. vol. i. pp. 423, 424. Besoigne, vol. i. pp. 293, 297, 299. Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 46.

was 60,000 livres: 40,000 he set apart for the poor, and the rest sufficed for the support and education of his family. With this he retired to a château called Les Troux, not far from Port Royal, and put himself under the spiritual guidance of Singlin; to whom his obedience was so complete, that on his death-bed he declared, that never, since the relation of confessor and penitent had been established between them, had he had a will of his own. From the time of his retirement, he and De Bernières were the agents of Port Royal in the world. They provided money when it was wanting; executed and helped commissions of charity; held their legal knowledge and their social influence at the disposal of the community; and, in time of trouble, provided for the persecuted a safe asylum. In particular, the house of De Bernières was the home of any of the hermits whom business or necessity brought to Paris; there died, in 1657, De Bagnols, and in 1661, De Bâcle. Either may furnish an example, parallel to that of the Arnaulds, of the strength and religiousness of character, which is to be noticed about this time in many of what are called the parliamentary families of France.*

In the years between the first and second wars of the Fronde, the community found two zealous friends in a different rank of life, the Duc and Duchesse de Luynes. He was the son of the famous Connétable de Luynes, the favourite of Louis XIII., by Marie de Rohan, better known as Duchesse de Chevreuse, the friend of Anne of Austria, the implacable enemy, first of Richelieu, and then of Mazarin. He had married an heiress of the house of Seguier, a cousin of the well-known Chancellor of that name; whose early predilection for the cloister had been

* Du Fossé, p. 114, *et seq.* Fontaine, vol. iii. p. 202. Besoigne, vol. iv. pp. 134, 143.

over-ruled in favour of the brilliant match thus offered to her. Husband and wife were warmly attached to each other; and both more disposed to find their happiness in domestic retirement than in the whirl of intrigue and dissipation which was the very life of Madame de Chevreuse. Little by little the duchess, upon whom perhaps the shadow of an early death was already beginning to rest, prevailed upon her husband to leave the world; till at last the plan was fully formed of building a little château in the vicinity of Port Royal des Champs, where, as far as was compatible with their wedded state, they might live the hermit life. This Château de Vaumurier, so called from the neighbouring hamlet, was begun in 1650, and was rapidly approaching completion, when the duchess prematurely gave birth to twins, and died, in her twenty-seventh year. She was buried in the convent church, at the request of her husband, who gave the best proof of sorrow for her loss, by establishing himself at Vaumurier, and thus carrying into execution the plan of life which they had jointly conceived.*

The château was hardly finished when the second war of the Fronde broke out, and the miseries of the first were repeated with greater intensity, and over a wider surface. It had been Angélique's intention once more to brave the dangers of a residence at Port Royal des Champs; but news came that the Abbey of St. Cyran had been sacked, and M. de Barcos treated with indignity. Pomponne, M. d'Andilly's country seat, had suffered a similar fate; a village close to Port Royal had been burned to the ground; and her friends implored her to take warning by these disasters. Accordingly, in April, 1652, she again transported the community to Paris, while the hermits, leaving Les Granges,

* Fontaine, vol. iii. p. 10, *et seq.* Besoigne, vol. i. p. 314; vol. iv. p. 131.

concentrated their forces in the monastic buildings, and in the Château de Vaumurier. There all was martial activity. The solitaries and the neighbouring peasants, to the number of 300, were armed and drilled, though the zeal of most of these recruits was, we are told, more conspicuous than their skill. The Duc de Luynes, accepted by all as their leader, was everywhere energetic and full of resource. The walls of the monastery were fortified by towers at regular intervals. Corn was brought in from the surrounding country, and stored in the church. Regular convoys of provisions were sent to Paris. The works on the abbey walls were pushed on like the fortifications of Jerusalem, sword in one hand, trowel in the other. The old soldiers readily threw themselves into the warlike preparations, and suffered their martial ardour to be rekindled. Even Le Maître caught the infection, and buckled on a sword. Only De Saçi could not view this change of occupation with approval, for he had grave doubts as to the lawfulness of even defensive war, and thought that brigades and towers were a sign of want of faith in God's will and power to save them. His feeling, perhaps not very strongly expressed, was overruled for a time; then the old habit of obedience to the confessor returned by degrees. The course of conduct to be pursued in case of attack was referred to his arbitration; and he decided that the preparation of defences which were never to be used, and the firing of muskets not loaded with ball, to intimidate some advancing picket, were measures of self-defence which Christian men might lawfully adopt. We do not read that the attack was ever made. In the cases of D'Eragni and De la Petitière, at least, it would have been a good test of the efficacy of Singlin's and De Saçi's discipline. I doubt whether they would have forgotten the ball in loading the musket, or yielded possession of stone walls without a struggle.*

* Fontaine, vol. iii. p. 16, *et seq.* Besoigne, vol. i. p. 334.

Before Angélique had quitted Port Royal des Champs, the Duc de Luynes and M. de Bagnols had begun a work which entitled them to rank among the greatest benefactors of the abbey, and which the absence of the nuns now enabled them to carry uninterruptedly to completion. This was the entire renovation of the conventual buildings. The floor of the church, around which the soil had been accumulating for four centuries, was raised eight feet, and a dormitory, containing seventy-two cells, was built. Long afterwards, when the community was finally expelled from Paris, it was remarked, that M. de Luynes must have been guided by some prophetic instinct in his selection of this number, for precisely seventy-two nuns preferred disgrace to the signature of the Formulary. "We have before now," writes Angélique, when the buildings were just begun, "had gentlemen shoemakers; now we have a duke and peer for a clerk of the works." These undertakings were the means of affording subsistence to nearly 500 workmen, in a period of distress which appears almost to have surpassed that of the former war. Many more were dependent upon alms, distributed by two or three aged nuns, who had courageously remained behind at Port Royal for that purpose. Two hundred peasants were wholly supplied with food from the soup kitchen of good Mère Louise, who was probably not far wrong when she went one day to M. de Luynes, to complain that his warlike arrangements had interfered with her cooking, and said, "My good sir, *your* arms are guns and muskets; but my large boiler is a great cannon, too, and must be set up again, if you please." *

Angélique's hospitality during the Fronde was not less conspicuous than her goodness to the poor. The revenues of the abbey were small, and the number of those dependent

* Lettres de la Mère Ang. vol. ii. pp. 61, 113, 141. Mém. pour servir. vol. i. p. 251.

on them rapidly increasing. In May, 1651, she tells the Queen of Poland that the number of religious persons connected with the two houses was 228.* In December of the same year they are not fewer than 300.† Yet in the midst of the first war she implores De Bernières to turn his liberality away from herself and her companions, who had taken a vow of poverty, and to direct it towards those who were poor by compulsion. And she calculates, that during these troubles, 400 nuns, of various religious orders, had received at Port Royal such entertainment as they needed. On one occasion, no fewer than thirty-two nuns, who had been driven from their monastery at Étampes, found themselves at nightfall in the Fauxbourg, having no common place of refuge, and unable, from their ignorance of the world, and especially of Paris, to find the friends with whom they hoped to receive shelter. One of them had formerly known Madame le Maître, and encouraged the rest to throw themselves upon the charity of Port Royal. The hour was untimely, and to receive such guests without the archbishop's permission, contrary to conventual law. But Angélique's heart was large enough for the duty of hospitality, and brave enough for defiance of the law. All were joyfully admitted; the beds of the inmates given up to the new comers; to-morrow's dinner sacrificed to find them a supper; while next day the archbishop granted permission to the abbess to act as she thought fit in all such cases. Nor was hospitality always without its reward. The calumnies which finally prevailed against Port Royal were more loudly uttered, and gained wider credence every day. So some of the nuns of Gif, who had with difficulty persuaded themselves, even in great necessity, to take refuge at Port Royal des Champs, went home con-

* Lettres, vol. i. p. 562. † Lettres, vol. ii. p. 16.

vinced that they had much to learn from the order and charity of the maligned community. More than once Angélique tells her correspondents how the nuns, whom they entertained, were amazed to see images, and rosaries, and holy water, and to hear invocations to the saints, in a house where they had been taught to look for a form of heresy, more savage even than Calvinism.*

In January, 1653, the sisterhood once more returned to their home in the valley. Just twelve months afterwards, Le Maître was compelled, by causes to which I shall allude in another chapter, to issue a memoir in contradiction of the many calumnies against himself and his companions, which were being industriously circulated. He enumerates the hermits one by one, describes their abode, their mode of life, and the reasons which had induced them to adopt it. He emphatically denies the existence of any religious organisation. There are no vows, no common dress, no compulsory discipline, not even any social worship, except such as takes place in the convent church. "If," he goes on to say, "it be a crime to be united by a holy affection, and to be of one heart and one soul; to think nothing more alien to the condition of a solitary and retired Christian than to occupy the mind with public affairs and the politics of the kingdom; to have for one's chief object of study, forgetfulness of the world, and to be troubled with neither its news, its business, nor its intrigues;—it is the crime of the first believers. And if it be justice to prevent those who try to live like true Christians from living together under the eye, and with the cognisance of their archbishop, who deigns to honour them with his good will and esteem, —it is the justice peculiar to the most unjust persecutors

* Lettres de la M. Ang. vol. ii. pp. 119—123. Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 74, *et seq.* Besoigne, vol. i. pp. 336, 342.

of the Christian religion, and such as, beyond doubt, will always be an object of horror to the first ministers and chief magistrates of a very Christian kingdom.

"If for five or six to pray privately to God, as they may chance to meet, and using none but the ordinary prayers of the Church, be to form such a community as is interdicted by ordinances; if to eat in the same room be to constitute an illegal union, and to read pious books instead of entertaining ourselves with vain and useless talk, be to render these meals profane and illicit; if to live soberly, and to make the Church's fasts a little longer than common, to follow in this respect the opinion of Cardinal Bellarmine, as well as of all the Fathers, without, nevertheless, compelling any one to act thus, and being as far as possible from blaming those who act otherwise;—if this be to set a bad example and one pernicious to decency of life, we must needs conclude that what St. Basil calls 'a more pure and exact profession of Christianity' is forbidden in our day; that we are less at liberty to practise solid virtue than are the men of the world to abandon themselves to vice; and that a few persons cannot with impunity serve God, while so many more are permitted without restraint to serve the devil!"*

* Recueil d'Utrecht, pp. 226, 227.

IV

THE course of our narrative has now for a long time led us by the verge of that most thorny and tangled of all theological thickets, the Jansenist controversy of the seventeenth century. Had it been my purpose to write the history of Jansenism, I must already have occupied much space in defining the exact position held by the "Augustinus" in the development of Christian doctrine; in describing the minute shades of difference which distinguish its theory of grace from that which Popes pronounced orthodox; in chronicling the war of pamphlets and censures, of negotiations and intrigues which immediately followed its publication. But as my object is rather the delineation of character than the history of doctrine,—as I wish not so much to trace the variations of Christian belief as to show the essential unity of the Christian spirit which underlies them all,—I shall not ask my readers to accompany me further into the depths of the Jansenist dispute than is necessary to understand the faith which animated the nuns and recluses of Port Royal, and the causes of the persecution which they suffered.

The Jansenist controversy is a part of that great and endless debate as to "fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute," in which, according to Milton, even the rebel angels engaged, and which still separates Christian churches. One of the many theological forms of the dispute may be raised by the question, How is the work of redemption to be effected? A certain alteration in the moral nature of man has been produced by his fall from a state of innocence;

how is he to be restored to a condition of acceptance with God? Only by the operation of Divine grace, a large class of theologians at once reply. Its help is necessary before he can even desire to be reconciled with God. Antecedent to its influence, both his will and his desire are hopelessly weak and corrupt. And if the work of salvation be consummated in the soul, its continuance and completion, as well as its commencement, are to be directly ascribed to the efficacy of God's Holy Spirit.—Such I understand to be, in its main features, the doctrine of Augustine. The various questions arising from it which may become the subjects of controversy will at once suggest themselves to every student of theology. Is a grace sufficient for salvation accorded to all men; or is its distribution arbitrarily limited by the will of God to the elect? Are we to conceive of a possibility of resistance to, or, on the other hand, of co-operation with the grace of God, as inherent in the will of man? Are those persons on whom the help of the Spirit descends thenceforward incapable of a final defection from a state of grace?

Opposed to this is the scheme of Christian doctrine known as Pelagian. Augustine's characteristic tenet is the necessity of prevenient grace before a man can so much as desire to be saved. Pelagius, on the contrary, believed that the human will has not suffered a necessary corruption in Adam's fall; that it can therefore naturally turn to God; and that though the Christian Church is the divinely appointed channel of spiritual blessings, it is nevertheless possible for a human soul outside the pale of Christianity to deserve and obtain the help of the Spirit. But though these were the opinions against which Augustine waged war in the great Pelagian controversy, and which are logically opposed to his own, the form of doctrine called "Semi-Pelagian" is that which historically we oftenest find at variance with it. According to this, which took its rise at Marseilles

in Augustine's lifetime, the fall has so far corrupted the heart of man as to make the help of the Spirit necessary in the work of salvation; but all, at least within the fold of the Church, are able to desire this assistance, which will be refused to none, while, the aid once given, the Spirit and the will co-operate to complete the process of redemption.*

An interpreter of Scripture, who did not go to the Bible with the determination to find only his own theory there, might perhaps imagine that he traced the germs of these hostile doctrines in the epistles of St. James and St. Paul: a student of human nature might penetrate still deeper to their source in fundamental differences of character and experience. Those who, like Augustine, enter the Church by a sudden recoil from self-indulgence, and after an ample trial of the liberty of the will, are naturally apt to depreciate their own, to magnify God's share in the process of conversion. Those who, like Pelagius, are personally ignorant of the severer conflicts of conscience,— in whom, from youth upwards, religious affections have been quietly growing and gathering strength, will regard the doctrine of the will's utter helplessness as exaggerated and untrue. However this may be, the Pelagian controversy has never been extinct in the Church. Western Christendom bowed, for the most part, to the authority of the Bishop of Hippo: though in Gaul, the synod of Lyons (A.D. 475) adopted a Semi-Pelagian confession; while many of the Greek Fathers were understood to hold the same form of belief.† But the debate died away, or was overpowered by others of a fresher, if not a greater interest; while the state of the Church, not yet sundered by a schism, or narrowed into a papacy, prevented an authoritative decision upon all controverted points of

* Hase: History of the Christian Church, American translation, p. 121, *et seq.* Hallam, Lit. of Europe, vol. ii. p. 425, *et seq.*

† Hase, p. 125.

doctrine. The greatest of the schoolmen, Thomas Aquinas, whose authority availed so much with the Catholic theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, taught in the thirteenth, a system which was supposed to be that of Augustine. So too the Reformed churches in theory, if not in reality, have inclined to the same side. The impotency of the human will, and its absolute need of Divine Grace for the performance of any act which should be well-pleasing to God, were tenets held by Luther; and the popular designation of Augustine's doctrine, by the often incorrect name of Calvinism, is proof enough that the Reformer of Geneva threw the weight of his authority into the same scale. The germs of the ancient dispute still exist in the discrepancies between the Articles and the Liturgy of the English Church; while it is well known that the Lambeth Articles, drawn up by Archbishop Whitgift, were more decidedly Augustinian than those which had previously been adopted.* So that although the Lutheran Church of Germany has always spoken with a less decided tone upon this matter than her Reformed sister; though the Church of England was prevailingly Arminian through more than two centuries of its existence; and though a voice of Pelagian belief in the natural health and freedom of the will has always made itself heard in Christendom — it is allowed us to say, that the Augustinian has hitherto been also the Protestant side of this great debate.

The Augustinian doctrine has been pre-eminently one of controversy. It is the result of keen metaphysical speculation upon the deep things of God and His Providence; and is therefore more eagerly and logically maintained in seasons of revived theological inquiry than at less stormy

* Fuller's Church History of Britain, ed. Nichols, vol. iii. p. 147. Tayler's Retrospect of the Religious Life of England, p. 63.

periods of the development of the Church. For the same reason, it is rather conspicuous in the written creeds of churches than effective as an animating principle of Christian life. Thus while the theology of the Reformation outwardly took this form, it was found possible for the Lutheran, and still more for the Anglican Church, to cherish a Semi-Pelagian faith, till the Evangelical reaction of our own day brought both into closer accordance with their original principles. So too, while the Church of Rome has fully acknowledged the authority of Augustine and of Thomas Aquinas, and has especially sought in the works of the latter an exposition of her faith, the general tendency of her doctrine and practice could at no period have been described as Augustinian. In the sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformation was a proof of this fact: since that time, it may perhaps be more correctly described as its cause. The Papal see has done what it could, to preserve an attitude of dignified and consistent impartiality. It has striven to avoid, on the one hand, the error of favouring Calvin, on the other, that of condemning Augustine. Sometimes it has forbidden controversy; at others it has evaded the responsibility of decision. But since the Reformation, it has been able to prove itself orthodox in this matter, chiefly by showing that it is not Protestant.

The Society of Jesus was first enrolled in the Papal armies, as a force likely to be effective against the Reformation. Hence, from its very origin, it found itself necessarily opposed to the most characteristic of Protestant doctrines. But it soon excited the jealousy and envy of religious orders, as great and more ancient than itself: nor least of the Dominicans, who took the law from the mouth of St. Thomas, the angelical doctor. And the enemies of the Jesuits might further allege, that the accommodating spirit of their policy, and the flexibility of their morals,

are little in harmony with a doctrine which limits salvation to a few chosen saints, whose words and actions are all immediately sanctified by the Spirit. Whatever be the cause of the fact, it is certain that the Catholic side of the Augustinian controversy has in modern times been chiefly upheld by Jesuit polemics. We seem to listen to a rehearsal of the great Jansenist debate, in the dispute of Baius and Lessius, which preceded it by nearly a hundred years. Baius, who was, like Jansen, a professor of theology at Louvain, had sought to repair the intentional indefiniteness of the Tridentine decrees, by writings in which he developed a scheme of Augustinian doctrine. Seventy-nine propositions extracted from his works were condemned first by Pius V. (1567), and afterwards by Gregory XIII. (1579): while, a few years later, the theological faculty of Louvain avenged itself by stigmatising as heretical thirty-four propositions advanced by his Jesuit adversary, Lessius. Sixtus V. had already commanded both parties to maintain silence in a debate which heretics were watching with unconcealed satisfaction, when the strife was renewed by Molina, a Spanish Jesuit, in a work entitled "The compatibility of free will with the gifts of grace, with the divine foreknowledge, with predestination, and reprobation:" published at Lisbon in 1588.* The Dominicans urged the suppression of a book which they characterised as Pelagian; the Jesuits maintained, as usual, the honour of their order, in the person of one of its members. At last, in 1597, Clement VIII. summoned a congregation, to decide the whole question of grace and free-will. The Pope was understood to be ready to condemn Molina, but Henri IV. lent his influence to the opposite side. The proceedings dragged their weary

* Liberi arbitrii, cum gratiæ donis, divinâ præscientiâ, prædestinatione et reprobatione concordia, Olyssip. 1588.

length through ten years; till finally, in 1607, Paul V. dismissed the congregation without pronouncing a decision, and imposed silence upon all the disputants.*

We have already seen that it was to the writings of Augustine that St. Cyran and Jansen turned, as the fountain of a purer faith than that inculcated by ordinary teachers of theology. And so the very title of Jansen's book, which had been the labour of his life, and which from his death-bed he commended to the care of his friends, and the judgment of the Holy See, at once declares the theological position of its author. It is called "The Augustinus of Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ypres; or, The Doctrine of St. Augustine touching the Health, Sickness, and Remedy of Human Nature, against the Pelagians and Massilians;"† and is preceded by an allegorical title-page, representing Augustine with four attendant doctors, trampling the unhappy Pelagius, and his fellow-believers, Cœlestius and Julianus, beneath their feet. The very names of Augustine's old adversaries — the Pelagians and Massilians — are there, as if the book had not been an independent treatise published 1200 years after the great strife, but a contemporary contribution to the debate. So, too, the whole of the first volume is occupied with an historical statement of the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian heresies; while the second is devoted to an exposition of Augustine's theory of human nature; and the third contains his doctrine of Grace. The design of the book is thus expository only. The question is not one of Catholic, or of general Patristic teaching. The Church might, in its latest decrees of Trent, have fallen short of Augustinian severity of dogma: the faith of other

* Hase, p. 467. Hallam, Lit. of Europe, vol. ii. pp. 75, 76. Ranke, History of the Popes, vol. ii. p. 89.

† Cornelii Jansenii, Episcopi Iprensis, Augustinus: seu doctrina S. Augustini de humanæ naturæ sanitate, ægritudine, medicinâ, adversus Pelagianos et Massilienses.

fathers might have been little accordant with that of the great African bishop. These are questions which Jansen does not turn aside to discuss. He appeals to the authority of Augustine in the controversy of Grace, as confidently as a Protestant polemic appeals to the Bible. To draw out correctly the sense of Augustine's voluminous works, must, in his view, be the same thing as to state the doctrine of the Church. In an Epilogue to the work he distinctly lays down this position: "I am a man," he says, "and therefore exposed to the risk of human error. I have avoided error when I could; for the cases in which I could not, I implore the reader's pardon. Let the recollection of my assiduous labour preserve me from the reproach of hardihood; the knowledge of my sincerity make amends for the simplicity of my error. Nevertheless, I know that if I have erred, it is not in the assertion of Catholic truth, but in the statement of the opinion of Augustine; for I have not laid down what is true or false—what is to be held or rejected according to the faith of the Catholic Church, but only what Augustine taught and declared was to be held."* Nevertheless, he is not satisfied that his exposition of Augustine's doctrine should remain without an application to contemporary errors. After the Epilogue comes an Appendix, or, as he calls it, "a parallel between the errors of the Massilians and the opinions of certain modern authors;" and among them are Vasquez, Lessius, Molina, all Jesuit theologians of repute. †

Jansen died on the 6th May, 1638; but the first edition of his book was published at Louvain only in 1640. The controversy of which that university had already been the seat, as well as the part which the Society had taken in it,

* Augustinus, vol. iii. p. 458.

† "Erroris Massiliensium et opinionis quorundam recentiorum παράλληλον et statera: in qua discrimen utriusque sententiæ παραλλήλως indagatur: et complurибus notis perspicue ostenditur." Augustinus, vol. iii. p. 459.

will sufficiently explain why the Jesuits, even if they did not know the secret of the Appendix, were eager to prevent the printing of the "Augustinus." In this, indeed, they were unsuccessful, for the Faculty of Theology protected the bequest of an associate of whom it was justly proud; and their intrigues were next directed to procure a condemnation from Rome. Never did any book receive a more stormy welcome. Within a few months after its appearance the University, the Jesuits, the executors of Jansen, the printer of the "Augustinus," the Spanish governor of the Low Countries, and the Papal Nuncio, were engaged in a warfare of pamphlets, treatises, pasquinades, pleadings, synods, audiences, which it would be impossible to attempt to set forth in historical sequence. Meanwhile, St. Cyran, in his prison at Vincennes, received the work which was half his own, with affectionate exultation. "It was the book of devotion," he said, "of these latter days — it would last as long as the Church. After St. Paul and St. Augustine no one had written concerning Grace like Jansen."* A second edition was published at Paris in 1641; a third at Rouen in 1643; and, before long, the controversy, which every day grew hotter in the Netherlands, burst into flame in France.

Paul V.'s bull, interdicting all further debates on Grace, had been renewed by Urban VIII., who in 1640 occupied the Holy See. This document the Jesuits had quoted as a ground for preventing the issue of Jansen's book; while, on the other hand, the University alleged that the bull, having been published only in Rome, could not be known to, or binding on, theologians in Flanders. Little by little, however, it appeared that the Jesuits were not mistaken in relying on the papal authority. In 1642 Urban gave orders that a bull should be prepared renewing the constitutions

* Lancelot, vol. i. pp. 105, 107.

of his predecessors, and once more forbidding the continuance of the controversy. The Jansenists allege, with what reason it is now impossible to say, that the Pope forbade the introduction of Jansen's name into the bull, or any specific condemnation of the doctrine of the "Augustinus," but that the preparation of the document was intrusted to an officer of the Inquisition, who was devoted to the Jesuits, and who, on this occasion, betrayed his trust to serve them. It is certain that the bull, which was dated March 6th, 1642, but which was not published till June 19th, 1643, not only mentions Jansen by name, but declares that his book "includes and maintains, to the great scandal of all Catholics, and in contempt of the authority of the Holy See, many propositions which have been already condemned by his Holiness's predecessors." The charge of making known this decision in the Low Countries was intrusted to Fabio Chigi — afterwards Alexander VII. — now nuncio at Cologne. But the University of Louvain affected to disbelieve that the Holy Father could possibly mean to condemn what was the acknowledged doctrine of Augustine; besides, there was a mistake in the date of the document, and the printer had misplaced a comma, which might lead to grave doctrinal results. So a deputation was sent to Rome to expostulate with the Pope, and peace seemed more distant than ever. *

The tocsin of controversy had been sounded in France as early as 1642, by one Habert, who in a series of sermons delivered at Nôtre Dame, denounced Jansen and his doctrine, as more dangerous than even the Huguenots and their errors. "We have no longer to do with the heretics of Charenton," he thundered; "we must fight against children of the Church, who like vipers mangle their mother's bosom."† Such raving as this, however

* Gerberon: Histoire Générale du Jansenisme, vol. i. pp. 48, 67, 78.

† Gerberon, vol. i. p. 64. Besoigne, vol. v. p. 407.

significant as a sign of the times, was nevertheless premature; De Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, repeated the Papal tactics, and without pronouncing a doctrinal opinion, forbade all future mention of the controversy in the pulpit. Antoine Arnauld, however, could not hear the friend of his imprisoned master attacked, without hastening to reply: an "Apology for Jansen" from his pen appeared in 1644; and a second "Apology," answered in the succeeding year Habert's rejoinder to the first. In the meantime the Sorbonne had imitated the conduct of the University of Louvain in regard to Urban VIII.'s bull. The king had issued a lettre de cachet, commanding the Theological Faculty to receive it; the Archbishop and the Nuncio supported the royal authority. Nevertheless, the Sorbonne, at an extraordinary assembly, held on the 15th January, 1644, refused either to receive or to publish the bull; although, at the same time, it forbade its bachelors and doctors to maintain any of the condemned propositions.*

For nearly five years the controversy in France smouldered without breaking into open flame; while in the Low Countries the fire raged with unabated force. At last, in 1649, Nicholas Cornet†, Syndic of the Faculty of Theology at Paris, called the attention of that body to certain theological propositions, which were sometimes advanced in the academical exercises of the bachelors, and which he professed himself unable to declare heretical or orthodox. The propositions were seven in number;

* Besoigne, vol. v. p. 408. Gerberon, vol. i. p. 150.

† I translate the following note from St^e. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 149: "He was of Amiens, where his family still exists, in the person, for example, of M. Cornet d'Incourt. This gentleman, faithful to his traditions and his family, supported the Jesuits in the Chamber under the restoration. One day in especial he undertook to defend them against his then colleague, M. du Vergier de Hauranne; all the Chamber burst into a laugh, and the echo repeated the oracle, 'Pugnent ipsique nepotes.'"

all referring to the doctrine of Grace; and although not attributed to any author, or avowedly extracted from any book, were of that theological complexion which now began to be called Jansenist. Against this proceeding on the part of Cornet, seventy doctors at once protested, alleging that to initiate such a discussion was a direct contravention of the Papal command, while at the same time the propositions, though intended to cast discredit on the doctrine of Jansen, were manifestly fabricated, and had never been maintained by him. Nevertheless deputies were named to examine them; and all that the protesters could obtain, was that in place of Cornet's seventh proposition, one drawn from the opposite school of theology, affirming the sufficiency of attrition, as a preparation for communion, should be substituted.*

The condemnation of the seven propositions thus amended was about to be pronounced, when a dispute for precedence between the Dean of the Faculty and the Chancellor of Nôtre Dame broke up the assembly. And after the Parliament of Paris had interposed to prevent the publication of the censure, in the same way as if it had been regularly adopted, an appeal was made to the central authority at Rome. Cardinal Pamphili, under the name of Innocent X., had succeeded, in 1644, to Urban VIII., and was, so wrote the Jesuit Fathers at Rome, willing if not eager to pronounce judgment in this matter. Habert, now Bishop of Vabres, took up the word; and wrote a letter to the Pope, asking for a decision upon the first five of Cornet's propositions. The letter was not submitted to the assembly of the clergy for adoption; but was privately signed by nearly seventy bishops, some of whom however declared that they set their names to it from a *bonâ fide* wish for a papal decision on a point of

* Gerberon, vol. i. pp. 300, 303. Besoigne, vol. v. p. 413.

controverted doctrine. So great a weight of episcopal authority, backed by the influence of Vincent de Paul, who was now an eager enemy of the Jansenists, prevailed to procure from the Queen Mother a letter from the young Louis XIV. to the Pope, demanding a definition of Catholic faith. Meanwhile the indefatigable pen of Arnauld had not been idle: one bulky pamphlet was hurled at the head of Cornet; another was directed against the bishop's letter. Thirteen other bishops, jointly or severally, addressed epistles to the Pope, pointing out that the former document in no sense proceeded from the French clergy as a body, and declaring their personal disapprobation of it. At last, at the end of the year 1651, the Pope appointed a congregation of four cardinals, assisted by eleven theological assessors, to examine and report upon the Five Propositions; and either party sent deputies to Rome to support and plead its cause.*

The famous Five Propositions deserve to be recorded in all their original obscurity. As stated in the bishop's appeal to the Pope, they were as follow:—

I. Some commandments of God are impossible of performance to just men, according to their present strength, even though they be willing and striving to perform them; and the grace which would make these commandments possible, is also wanting to them.

II. In the state of fallen nature, no resistance is ever made to internal grace.

III. In order to produce merit or demerit in the state of fallen nature, liberty from necessity is not required in man, but liberty from constraint is sufficient.

* Gerberon, vol. i. pp. 309, 389, 420, 442. Besoigne, vol v. pp. 421, 425.

IV. The Semi-Pelagians admitted the need of prevenient internal grace for all actions, even for the beginning of faith; and they were heretics, inasmuch as they would have this grace to be such as the will of man could either resist or obey.

V. It is a Semi-Pelagian error to say that Christ died or shed his blood for all men, universally.*

But if we would understand the whole tortuous course of this debate, we must remark, that although in Habert's letter, the name and the doctrine of Jansen were thrice mentioned, it was nowhere explicitly stated, that these five propositions were extracted from the "Augustinus." Then the very obscurity of the phrases naturally gives rise to the cavil, that the propositions may be taken in an heretical and in a catholic sense; from which again springs a double question; if condemned, in what sense are they condemned? If really maintained by Jansen, in what sense are they maintained by him? And every one of these questions originated a branch of the controversy for itself.

It was not till the 24th September, 1652, that the congregation commenced its sittings, which lasted till May of the following year. At several of its deliberations the

* The original of the Five Propositions, quoted from Gerberon, vol. i. p. 312, is subjoined:

I. Aliqua Dei præcepta hominibus justis volentibus et conantibus, secundum præsentes quas habent vires, sunt impossibilia: deest quoque iis gratia, quâ possibilia fiant.

II. Interiori gratiæ in statu naturæ lapsæ nunquam resistitur.

III. Ad merendum et demerendum in statu naturæ lapsæ non requiritur in homine libertas a necessitate, sed sufficit libertas a coactione.

IV. Semi-Pelagiani admittebant prævenientis gratiæ interioris necessitatem ad singulos actus, etiam ad initium fidei: et in hoc erant hæretici quod vellent eam gratiam talem esse, cui posset humana voluntas resistere vel obtemperare.

V. Semi-Pelagianorum error est dicere Christum pro omnibus omnino hominibus mortuum esse, aut sanguinem fudisse.

Pope himself was present. The Jansenist deputies, more to the credit of their honesty than of their sagacity, resolved to constitute themselves the defenders of Augustinian doctrine, rather then of Jansen's exposition of it; although by so doing, they placed themselves, in case of failure, in an attitude of needless opposition to the Holy See, which could not but profess an equal reverence with themselves for the teaching of the great Father. And they complained, justly or not, that the tribunal was prejudiced against them. They could only gain audience of the Pope, and put their memorials into his hand, by chance or surprise. The congregation declined to hear the debates and recriminations of the opposite parties, and on the only occasion, on which the Jansenist deputies were allowed to appear before them, no reply and rejoinder were permitted. One speaker expounded what he conceived to be the orthodox doctrine of Grace; another laid before the judges what was afterwards known as "L'écrit à trois colonnes," in which three senses, in which the Five Propositions might be understood, were carefully distinguished. One was the Calvinist or heretical sense; one the orthodox, or rather Jansenist; the third the Molinist, which was as little to be received as the first. Only the approach of night put a term to these learned and subtle harangues, each of which lasted more than four hours. Even to the end, the balance of victory did not decisively incline to either side. Innocent, who concealed a vigorous will, and a firm policy, beneath a gentle, caressing, indecisive manner, cajoled the Jansenists into the belief that he was unwilling to give judgment against them. He was old, he said; canon law was his profession; he had never studied theology; this, pointing to his crucifix, was his only adviser in such matters. Even when the blow had fallen, he admitted the defeated doctors to an audience; gave them his pontifical blessing,

and good store of indulgences; assuring them, meanwhile, that the doctrine of Augustine was still that of the Holy See. Nevertheless the blow did fall; and the bull condemning the Five Propositions was issued on Whitsunday, May 31st, 1653.

There was no doubt as to its terms. All the propositions were declared heretical; the first and the fifth were further qualified as impious and blasphemous. Nothing was said as to the sense in which Jansen maintained them; nor was it directly asserted that they were to be found in the "Augustinus." But the bull began with a statement that the dispute as to the Five Propositions had arisen in consequence of the publication of Jansen's book; and concluded with a caution, that the condemnation of these was not to be construed into approval of the other opinions contained in the same. So that had Innocent X. been able to foresee the celebrated distinction between the *droit* and the *fait;* between the Papal right to condemn the propositions, wherever found, and to state infallibly the fact that they were contained in the "Augustinus," he would have been as explicit upon this point as Alexander III. afterwards was.*

There were good political reasons why Cardinal Mazarin should be willing to move the Church of France to receive the bull. Cardinal de Retz, his able and indefatigable enemy in the intrigues and wars of the Fronde, was just now safe in prison; and yet the incarceration of a cardinal, for what good reason soever, was not likely to be pleasing to the Holy See. Besides, De Retz, in his quality of coadjutor of Paris, as well as his uncle, the archbishop, had always favoured Port Royal; a fact which had drawn down upon that house a strong suspicion of disloyalty. To enforce Innocent's bull upon the Jansenists, was therefore at

* Gerberon, vol. i. p. 447; vol. ii. pp. 123, 139, 145. St^e. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 512.

once to be avenged upon the partisan of an enemy, and to propitiate the pride of the Pope, wounded by that enemy's imprisonment. Accordingly, as soon as the bull arrived at Paris, the king was made to issue a declaration, enjoining all the bishops of his kingdom to receive and publish it. Twenty-eight prelates, who happened to be in Paris at the time, were called together by the cardinal; and this extemporary synod, usurping the functions of a regular assembly of the clergy, resolved to accept the bull, without waiting for its registration by the Parliament of Paris. De Marca, Archbishop of Toulouse, who also had his reasons for making peace with Rome, was charged with the preparation of a circular letter to all the French prelates, as well as of an epistle to the Pope. In the latter it was remarked that he had rendered the language of the bull still more definite, declaring explicitly that the Five Propositions had been extracted (*excerptæ*) from the "Augustinus." The letters were, nevertheless, received, and ordered to be dispatched. The bull was also sent to the Sorbonne, accompanied by a royal letter, and there accepted without opposition.

Before long the important document was duly published in every diocese in France. Some bishops contented themselves with simple publication, without comment of their own; others thought it necessary to guard by protest against any real or imaginary infringement of the rights of the Gallican Church; others again, though these were but few, explained that in condemning the propositions, his Holiness did not condemn the true doctrine of Augustine, whatever that might be. Once more a war of words arose; the assemblies of the clergy, held in successive years 1654, 1655, 1656, were resolved to be content with nothing less than an unconditional acceptance of the bull by all the bishops; and little by little the recusants gave way. Now at last the Jesuit triumph was complete.

Nor were their rejoicings moderated by much regard to the feelings of their vanquished enemy. In the midst of the controversy as to the reception of the bull, appeared a Jesuit's almanac*, in the allegorical frontispiece of which Jansen was represented in episcopal garb, but with wings such as are pictorially assigned to the devil, flying before the victorious Pope and King into the arms of the Huguenots. The students in the Jesuit college at Maçon, we are told, celebrated the triumph of their party in a procession, where the unfortunate Bishop of Ypres again figured in disgraceful guise. It is matter of regret that De Saci thought fit to reply to these and many other attacks of the same kind, in a poetical pasquinade, in which he stooped from the eminence of good taste and moderation on which the polemics of his party had hitherto been conducted. A keener weapon than his somewhat clumsy satire, was a story which the Jansenists were wont to tell of this period. A bishop of the opposite school of theology, they said, entered the refectory of a convent of his diocese, at the moment when the reader was uttering the words, "God, who worketh in us to will and to do." Instantly he imposed silence on doctrine so manifestly Jansenist, and ordered the book to be brought to him, to find that the offender was St. Paul.†

The Jansenists could not but acknowledge their defeat, however they might try to soften it by the assertion that the propositions were condemned, in a sense which was that neither of Jansen, nor of Augustine. Nor need we distrust the sincerity of those protestations of a desire for the peace of the Church, which led them to lay before Cardinal Mazarin a proposition for a truce to controversy

* La Mère Angélique informs the Queen of Poland (Lettres, vol. ii. p. 441) that 16,000 copies of this almanac were sold or distributed.

† Gerberon, vol ii. p. 154, *et seq.*; Besoigne, vol. v. p. 445; Racine, Hist. Abregé de P. R. p. 372; St^e. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 518; Du Fossé, p. 127.

and dissension. But the opposite party yet thirsted for severer measures of repression, and the opportunity was not long wanting. The Duc de Liancourt, who had built himself a cottage at Port Royal des Champs, whither he frequently retired, and whose friendly relations with the Jansenists were well known, went at the beginning of the year 1655 to confession, at his parish church of St. Sulpice. The priest, one Picoté, accused him of disingenuous concealment. "You tell me nothing," he said, "of one important matter. You entertain in your house a Jansenist, a heretic. You have placed your granddaughter at Port Royal to be educated. You are in constant communication with Port Royalists." M. de Liancourt replied that to treat with hospitality, and to maintain friendly relations with men of acknowledged purity of life and faith, and to place his daughter where he knew that she would be piously brought up, were not in his view sins, and therefore not matters of confession. "Nevertheless," answered the confessor, "I cannot give you absolution till you have dismissed the Abbé de Bourzeis; have broken off all intercourse with the Port Royalists, and have withdrawn your granddaughter from a house like that." The duke quietly retired without the absolution which was to be obtained only on such degrading terms. An appeal made by the duchess to the curé of the parish, served to prove that the event was not a chance outbreak of individual bigotry, but a deliberate scheme of spiritual dictation. The whole venue of the controversy was changed. It was no longer whether five abstract propositions, extracted no one could determine whence, and understood no one could define how, were to be considered heretical, but whether the members and friends of a community, distinguished for orthodoxy of life, if not of doctrine, were to be practically excluded from the pale of the Church.*

* Du Fossé, p. 134; Besoigne, vol. v. p. 457; Gerberon, vol. ii. p. 256.

Once more the untiring Arnauld entered the lists, in a "Letter of a Doctor of the Sorbonne to a Person of Condition: concerning an event which has recently happened in a Parish of Paris, to a Nobleman of the Court, February 24th, 1655." This called forth no fewer than nine replies: to which in July, he rejoined in his famous "Second Letter to a Duke and Peer (M. de Luynes)," a volume of 250 quarto pages. No sooner was this published, than both friends and foes felt that the struggle was approaching a fresh issue. The Jesuit party in the Sorbonne, knowing that they were in a majority, resolved to procure the condemnation of the letter, and the expulsion of its author from the faculty. Arnauld, on the other hand, attempted to forestal them, by appealing to Pope Alexander VII., who had by this time succeeded Innocent X., for justice and protection.*

The proposition for examining the letter was laid before the Sorbonne on the 4th of November. The plea that the matter was already before a higher tribunal was overruled: and six doctors, all of Anti-Jansenist opinions, headed by Cornet, the author of the Five Propositions, were appointed to report upon Arnauld's second letter. The report was presented on the 1st December. Two propositions worthy of censure had been discovered. Dr. Arnauld had asserted, I. That the Five Propositions had not been taught by Jansen, but were the fabrication of his enemies; and II. That the Scriptures, attested by the Fathers, show us, in the person of St. Peter, a just man, to whom the grace, without which we can do nothing, had been wanting on an occasion, at which we cannot say, that he did not sin. Here then is the germ of the famous distinction between the "fait" and the "droit." The first proposition is one merely of fact. Whether the Five Propositions were in the

* Besoigne, vol. v. p. 466; Gerberon, vol. ii. p. 253.

"Augustinus" or not, could surely be decided by an appeal to the book itself. "I trouble myself very little about the question of fact," says Pascal* in the First Provincial Letter: "if I were seized with curiosity to know whether these propositions are in Jansen, his book is neither so rare nor so great, but that I could read it all through to enlighten myself, without consulting the Sorbonne." The second proposition, on the contrary, is one of faith (*droit*). It was a repetition, said the examining doctors, of the first of the five propositions expressly condemned in Innocent X.'s bull. And the secret force of this distinction between "fait" and "droit" lay in its relation to the doctrine of Papal infallibility. It was one thing to admit that the Pope was infallible in an abstract statement of Catholic faith: quite another to accept as final his judgment in a matter of literary interpretation.*

The sittings of the Sorbonne lasted from the beginning of December to the end of January. The proceedings, if we may trust the statements of the defeated party, were marked by many irregularities. Seguier, Chancellor of France, presided at some of the later meetings, putting a check upon free discussion, both by his presence, and by arbitrary regulations which he imposed upon the debate.‡

* Lett. Prov. p. 25.

† Pascal. First Prov. Lett. Besoigne, vol. v. p. 467. Gerberon, vol. ii. p. 261.

‡ No speaker was allowed to occupy more than half an hour in the delivery of his address. To this the following passage (from the Second Prov. Letter, p. 39) alludes:—"N'est ce pas là l'opinion de votre école? Oui, dit le bon père, et je l'ai bien dit ce matin en Sorbonne. J'y ai parlé toute ma demi-heure, et sans le sable, j'eusse bien fait changer ce malheureux proverbe, qui court déjà en Paris: 'Il opine du bonnet, comme un moine en Sorbonne.' Et que voulez vous dire par votre demi-heure, et votre sable? lui repondis-je: taille-t-on vos avis à une certaine mesure? Oui, me dit-il, depuis quelques jours. Et vous oblige-t-on de parler demi-heure? Non. On parle aussi peu qu'on veut. Mais non pas tant que l'on veut, lui dis-je. O la bonne règle pour les ignorants! ô l'honnête prétexte pour ceux qui n'ont rien de bon à dire!"

Two deputies from each of the four mendicant orders had a prescriptive right to assist in the deliberations of the Faculty; on this occasion no fewer than forty monks balanced the votes of as many learned theologians, perhaps because, as Pascal said, "it was easier to find monks than arguments." A censure could not be lawfully pronounced by fewer than two-thirds of the whole company, while the majority which finally adopted this censure was little more than half. Above all, the accused doctor was not allowed to conduct his own defence. His fertile pen did indeed pour forth many appeals, and expostulations, and proofs: but he was informed that he could not be allowed to speak except on two conditions; first that he would swear submission to the censure, if pronounced: and then that he would confine himself to a simple statement of belief without argument or reply. Rather than comply with these, he gave up the advantage of a spoken defence, and set himself to prove that the obnoxious proposition of faith was expressed almost in the words of Augustine and Chrysostom: so that in condemning it, the Sorbonne would condemn the genuine Patristic doctrine. As to the fact he was willing to make concessions. "He had not the least thought of lessening the authority of the Pope's constitution; he had not undertaken to prove that the propositions were not to be found in Jansen's book; he had not even asserted that they were not there. He had said only that he could not declare that they *were* there: because having read the book, his conscience assured him that he had not read them in it. Nevertheless he condemned the Five Propositions in whatever book they might be found without exception, including even that of Jansen."* He submitted also to the useless humiliation of signing a formal apology for the passages of his letter, against which objection had been taken, declaring his regret that he had written them, and

* Lettres d'Antoine Arnauld, vol. i. p. 99.

that they had been understood in a sense different to that which he intended. It was all in vain. On the 14th of January the proposition as to the "fait" was condemned by a majority of 124 voices against 71. Forty monks and seven bishops swelled the majority: fifteen doctors refused to vote at all. The second proposition was discussed in various sittings till the 29th of January. Before the final vote was taken sixty doctors of the minority left the assembly, protesting against the restrictions which had been placed on liberty of speech. Judgment went almost by default: only nine voices were lifted up against the censure. A formula of submission was drawn up, which Antoine Arnauld, together with all present or future doctors and bachelors of the Faculty, was required to sign, on pain of expulsion. Only a short delay was accorded for consideration: Arnauld went into concealment, from which he emerged only in 1668. Seventy-one doctors, with a large number of licentiates and bachelors, were expelled with him from the Sorbonne, and after some brief negotiations with Rome, all his writings in this controversy were stigmatised as heretical by being placed in the Index.*

He received the blow with perfect calmness. At the very hour when the censure was being pronounced in the Sorbonne, he was walking and praying in a gallery at Port Royal. Suddenly these words of Augustine's commentary on the 118th Psalm occurred to his mind, and at once strengthened and soothed him:—"Since they have persecuted only the truth in me, help me, O Lord, that I may strive for the truth, even unto death." Similarly strong and wholesome was the consolation which Angélique offered him. "See brother," she said, "if these people submitted to the truth, you would say that your fine writings had

* Gerberon, vol. ii pp. 271, 282, 293. Besoigne, vol. v. pp. 476, 477, 480. Lettres d'A. Arnauld, vol. i. pp. 112, 150. Ste. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 531.

done it, and that is not the lesson of the grace which you maintain." Two days after the censure, he writes to his niece Angélique de St. Jean: "I am in very close hiding, and by God's grace without trouble or disquiet. I experience the truth of the promise of Christ in the Gospel, that he will give us, as a reward for having followed him, fathers, mothers, brothers, houses, lands, 'cum persecutionibus;' that is to say, that with the persecutions which he will send to try if we are really his, he will also give us the consolation of finding those who will have a father's and a mother's love for us."* And then he goes on to say — a singular instance of the activity and collectedness of his mind — that he has already found in his retreat, a boy of twelve years old, who cannot read, and that he is impatient to try M. Pascal's new method of teaching that art. The search for him was close: his escapes many and narrow: but the devotion of his friends carried him safely through a twelve years' concealment. Again and again some fresh product of his unwearied industry stimulated the police to a vain energy of pursuit. "Would you like me to tell you where M. Arnauld is hidden?" asked a lady once of the gens-d'armes who were ransacking her house. "He is safely hidden here"—pointing to her heart,—"arrest him if you can."

Were the controversy of grace less perplexed and subtle than it is, and especially had the Jansenist renewal of it turned more upon great principles of belief and less upon minute differences of doctrine, the reader might justly expect in this place an exact estimate of the dogmatic position of either party. But to attempt this would be at once to precipitate ourselves into the bottomless gulf of speculation, from which we have hitherto held resolutely aloof. Yet, perhaps, a few words upon the general aspect of the ques-

* Lettres d'A. Arnauld, vol. i. p. 116.

† Besoigne, vol. v. p. 482. Fontaine, vol. iii. p. 160.

tion may not be out of place. It is not easy to conceive of a territory of belief intervening between the Semi-Pelagianism, which holds the free and valid co-operation of the human will with the Divine Spirit, and the theory of Predestination commonly called Calvinist, which unconditionally refers all salvation to the efficacy of grace. Allow any power to the will, and you are gradually led to Semi-Pelagianism: ascribe all power to grace, and an apparently inexorable logic lands you in Calvinism. Jansen himself knew this well. A remarkable passage in the preface to his "Augustinus" is devoted to the exemplification of the fact in various figurative forms. "Such is the accord of these haughty Semi-Pelagian doctrines with man's reason, corrupted by pride, that the only defence against their syren voices is to stop our ears with grace, and to bind ourselves securely to the immovable mast of Augustine's authority. If, in rooting up Semi-Pelagianism, we leave but a single all but invisible fibre in the ground, the whole poisonous plant of error springs from it with renewed strength and luxuriance. As the links of a chain are intertwined, so that whoever lays hold of one draws the whole towards him; so to yield ever so little to Pelagius is to yield everything." And yet on this narrow ridge between Semi-Pelagianism and Calvinism, Jesuit and Jansenist were both trying to fix the boundary of Catholic faith. Each, in defending his belief against the other, ran the risk of embracing what the Church had pronounced heretical. Each took refuge from heresy in distinctions which were merely verbal, and phrases which were orthodox only in their lack of meaning. Hence the sufficient grace which is not efficacious; hence the power to perform the commandments of God which is no power at all. "Let the dead bury their dead." The controversy, always dull enough, is lustreless indeed beside the heroism and the constancy which it called forth.

But are the Five Propositions really to be found in the "Augustinus," or not? Pascal roundly asserted, in the First Provincial Letter, that no one had yet been able to point them out; that many persons declared that they had read propositions in that book the exact contrary of these; and that men who had believed, on the faith of general report, that they were Jansen's, were now beginning to doubt, for want of the irrefragable evidence of chapter and verse. And yet it is certain that the First Proposition is expressed in the very words of Jansen, and that the others may be easily inferred, or misconstrued, from passages which the critics are now ready to point out. It is indeed wonderful that in so enormous a book on the most delicate of all theological debates, only five heretical propositions should be discovered, and that only one of these should be expressed in the very words of the author. Though far from laying claim to the patience requisite for the perusal of such a book, I should be inclined, without much fear of serious error, to pronounce both parties mistaken. The Five Propositions are, I think, to be inferred from various passages of the "Augustinus," without unlawful torturing of the words or the sense. But, on the other hand, the Propositions, in the form in which they were condemned, by no means express the doctrine of Jansen. Even the first, which appears to be a verbal quotation from him, is, say the Jansenists, greatly modified by what precedes and follows. And to judge of so vast and elaborate a result of thought by five detached sentences, is a proceeding to be paralleled only by that of the old Greek blockhead who carried a brick in his pocket as a sample of his house.

Perhaps the Count de Grammont, the hero of the famous Memoirs, was not much mistaken in his judgment of a matter which seems remote enough from his usual range of thought. Louis XIV. once imposed upon him the task of reading through the "Augustinus," that he might really

know whether the Five Propositions were there, or not. "If the Propositions are there," reported the Count, when his task was accomplished, "they must be quite *incognito*." The word *incognito* was then almost new, and the witticism helped to give it currency. At the same time it is possible that "La Belle Hamilton" recollected the days of her youth at Port Royal, and prompted her husband's half Jansenist answer.*

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 389.

V.

On the 23rd of January, 1656, nine days, that is, after the vote of the Sorbonne on the "fait" of Jansen, and a week before the final condemnation of Antoine Arnauld, appeared the first of the "Provincial Letters." The hearing of the cause was adjourned from the halls of the Theological Faculty to the tribunal of public opinion. And the new advocate, whose voice commanded by turns laughter and indignation from all who were able to appreciate the keenest wit and the loftiest eloquence, was Blaise Pascal.

When, after a time, the troubles of Port Royal are laid to rest by the peace of the Church, and an opportunity is afforded to us of turning aside to consider the relations of the community to literature and society, the most interesting of our tasks will be to trace the history of Pascal's life and mind. But the immediate effect produced by the "Provincial Letters" compels us to consider them by themselves, and to sketch in this place their origin and literary history.

Pascal, now not quite thirty-three years of age, had been about a year under the direction of Singlin, and had resided during a part of that time at Port Royal des Champs. It was here that, one day, when the long contest in the Sorbonne was drawing to a close, Arnauld engaged in conversation with some of his friends upon the approaching defeat. Pascal was there, already famous in the scientific world for his arithmetical machine and his experiments with the barometer; Nicole, not much known to us yet, but who had been silently working in the schools of Port Royal since 1648, and had given Arnauld efficient help in

the recent controversy; perhaps also Vitart, the steward of the Duc de Luynes, and the cousin of Racine. The conversation turned upon the misapprehension by the public of the matters at issue. The doctors of the Sorbonne gave it out that the fundamental mysteries of the faith were involved in Arnauld's errors; while, in the absence of any definite and intelligible statement on the other side, people were beginning to imagine that a Jansenist was the most dangerous and incorrigible of all heretics. "Why should M. Arnauld," said his friends, "allow himself to be condemned without saying anything, like a child, and not make an effort to instruct the public as to the disputed points?" He accordingly undertook to draw up a popular statement of his case, and a few days afterwards read to the same friends the result of his labours. Whether he was unable to wield any lighter weapons of controversy than those used in the schools, or whether his mind and pen were weary after the long struggle which they had sustained, we cannot tell: the MS. was received without applause. "I see," said Arnauld, "that you do not like my paper; and I think that you are right. But you," he continued, turning to Pascal, "you are young, and ought to do something." Pascal modestly replied, that he thought he could sketch a rough draft, which his friends might polish and correct into the desired shape; and the next day produced "A Letter written to a Provincial by one of his Friends." No correction was needed: Arnauld was the first to give his hearty approval; and on the 23rd of January, 1656, the Letter was published.*

Pascal dashes boldly into the very midst of his subject. "Sir," he begins, "we have been practised upon. I was undeceived only yesterday. Up to that time I had believed that the subject of the dispute in the Sorbonne was very

* Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 277.

important, and involved the weightiest consequences to religion. So many assemblies of a society so celebrated as the Faculty of Theology at Paris, at which so many extraordinary and unexampled events have come to pass, compel us to believe that the subject of discussion must also be very extraordinary. Nevertheless, you will be much surprised when you learn from this letter what is the result of so great a preparation. And this is what I am about to tell you, in few words, and after having obtained the fullest information."*

He then states the question of "fait," and gives the particulars of the decision at which the Sorbonne had already arrived. With this, he says, his conscience is not concerned; he can read the "Augustinus" for himself if he wishes, and see if the propositions are really in it, though he wonders that if the matter be as the majority in the Sorbonne say it is, they do not at once settle the dispute, by pointing out the page and line where the propositions are to be found. "For, truly," and here speaks the natural philosopher, "the world becomes distrustful, and believes things only when it sees them." The question of "droit" is, however, more important, and must be minutely inquired into. "The business is to examine what M. Arnauld has said in his second letter, 'That the grace without which we can do nothing, was wanting to St. Peter in his fall.' Upon which you and I thought, that it was necessary to examine the great principles of grace, as, for instance, whether it is given to all men, or whether it is efficacious. But we were completely deceived. I am become a great theologian in a little time, and you are going to see the proofs of it." †

So he proceeds to describe how he went to a doctor of the Sorbonne, very zealous against the Jansenists, and tried

* Lett. Prov. p. 23. † Lett. Prov. p. 26.

to find out from him what the controversy was about. But the Molinist would neither affirm that grace was given to all men, nor deny that grace was efficacious. Where then lies the heresy of M. Arnauld's proposition? In this, "That he does not acknowledge that the just have the power to fulfil the commandments of God, in the way in which we understand it," with which answer the inquirer posts off to another acquaintance, "Jansenist, if ever any one was, and nevertheless a very decent man." But as the Molinist uttered Jansenism, so now the Jansenist maintains Molinism. It is a Catholic doctrine, which only Lutherans and Calvinists attack, that all the just have always the power to obey the commands of God. Full of this declaration, and of the earnestness with which it is made, the writer now returns to his Molinist doctor. Peace, he announces, will soon be restored to the Sorbonne, for the Jansenists have admitted the sole matter in dispute. "Gently," was the reply. "One must be a theologian to see the end of that. The difference between us is so subtle, that we can hardly distinguish it ourselves; it is too difficult for you to understand. Be content with knowing that the Jansenists will not hesitate to tell you that all the just have always the power to obey the commands of God. We don't dispute about that. They will not tell you that this power is '*proximate*.' There's the point." *

Back again now to the Jansenist. "Do you admit the proximate power?" He began to laugh, and said coolly to me, "Tell me in what sense you understand the words, and I will tell you what I believe." At haphazard the inquirer answers, "In the Molinist sense," and is informed that the Molinists themselves do not agree as to the sense of the word, but only as to its use, as a convenient instrument for persecuting M. Arnauld. So that once more he sets out

* Lett. Prov. p. 28.

on a tour of investigation, and knocks at many Molinist doors, asking in a way apparently most artless, really most subtle, the meaning of proximate power. He brings out the result, that the Jesuits and the Dominicans are only verbally agreed, but really at issue upon the point. Then, by one of the extraordinary coincidences, which authors are always at liberty to bring about, he has the opportunity of questioning his Jesuit and his Dominican friends at once. They tacitly admit the difference in the definitions which they give of proximate power, but are agreed upon the word, and are resolved that every one else shall be. The pupil at last is angry.

"Tell me, my fathers, I beg for the last time, what I must believe to be a Catholic? It is necessary, they all said to me together, to say that all the just have the proximate power, abstracting all meaning from the words. That is to say, said I, in leaving them, that I must pronounce the word 'proximate' with my lips for fear of being called a heretic. Is it then a Scripture word? No, said they. Is it authorised by the Fathers, or Councils, or Popes? No. Is it to be found in St. Thomas? No. Then what necessity is there to utter it, since it has neither authority, nor meaning of its own? You are obstinate, said they; you shall say it, or be a heretic, and M. Arnauld too; for we are the greater number, and, if necessary, we will bring in as many Cordeliers as will win the day." * And the sum of the whole is, that since the Catholic doctrine of Grace is equally maintained by both parties, it is only the meaningless word proximate which incurs any risk.

Such is a rude and imperfect outline of a composition which even now, when the interest of the controversy which it treats has died away, continues to charm both by the sparkling lucidity of its style, and the exquisite irony which

* Lett. Prov. p. 33.

is to be found in almost every sentence. It was struck out as we have seen, at a heat; and, after an interval of a few days, was followed by a second not inferior to itself. The topic treated in this was, "la grace suffisante," which even more than "le pouvoir prochain," was a subject of fierce contention between the hostile parties. The method of the second letter is similar to that of the first. The Jesuits say that there is a grace given to all men, which it rests with the free will of man to render efficacious. This they call a sufficient grace. The Jansenists hold that any sufficient grace must, without the help of free will at all, end in action, and be efficacious too. The doctrine of the new Thomists is peculiar. With the Jesuits they believe in a sufficient grace given to all men, but at the same time, before this can be of any practical use, a supplementary efficacious grace is necessary, which is not given to all. "So that following this doctrine, said I to him, this grace is sufficient, without being so? Precisely, said he; for if it suffices, no more is needed for action; and if it does not suffice, it is not sufficient." *

The writer of the letter goes to one of the divines who hold this whimsical doctrine, and engages him in an amusing dialogue, which ends in this conclusion. "Where are we then, cried I, and what side ought I to take? If I deny the doctrine of sufficient grace, I am a Jansenist; if I affirm it in the sense of the Jesuits, so that efficacious grace is not necessary, you say that I am a heretic; and if I affirm it in your sense, so as to make efficacious grace necessary, I offend against common sense, and the Jesuits say that I am a fool. What am I to do in this inevitable necessity of being either a fool, or a heretic, or a Jansenist? And within what limits are we reduced if only the Jansenists are at issue neither with faith, nor with reason, and preserve themselves both from folly and from error?" †

* Lett. Prov. p. 36. † Lett. Prov. p. 40.

After an amusing apologue in which the Dominicans are compared to a physician who should assure a wounded traveller, fainting from loss of blood, that, whether he has strength or not, he ought to be able to walk, because he has legs, the letter concludes with the following powerful appeal to the disciples of St. Thomas, to beware of the unnatural alliance which they had formed with the Jesuits. It is, as it were, a foretaste of that severe eloquence which abounds in the later letters:—"Come, father," says Pascal's Jansenist friend to the Dominican, "your order has received a honour which it uses but ill. It abandons that grace which has been entrusted to it, and which never has been abandoned since the creation of the world. That victorious grace, which was expected by the patriarchs, predicted by the prophets, conveyed to the world by Jesus Christ, preached by St. Paul, explained by St. Augustine, the greatest of the fathers, embraced by those who followed him, confirmed by St. Bernard, the last of the fathers, sustained by St. Thomas, the angel of the schools, transmitted by him to your order, maintained by so many of your fathers, and so gloriously defended by your clergy under Popes Clement and Paul; that efficacious grace which had been placed in your hands as a trust, that in a holy, ever-enduring order, it might find preachers who should publish it to the world till the end of time, is deserted for objects so unworthy. It is time that other hands should arm themselves in its quarrel; it is time that God should raise up to the doctor of grace fearless disciples, who, ignorant of worldly interests, shall serve Himself, for His own sake only. It may be that God shall no longer count the Dominicans among its defenders; but defenders it will never want, for, by its own omnipotent strength, it forms them for itself. It demands pure and disinterested hearts, and itself purifies them, and sets them free from worldly motives, which are incompatible with the interests of the

Gospel. Think well of it, father, and take care lest God remove this candlestick from its place, and leave you in darkness and without a crown, to punish the coldness which you have shown in a cause so important to his Church."*

While the public were laughing at Pascal's keen exposure of theological subtleties, the sentence of the Sorbonne was being carried into execution. The second letter, dated on the 29th of January, was published on the 5th of February; the censure had been pronounced on the 31st. But the new controversialist had discovered in himself an unsuspected power, which he was not slow to exercise. On the 9th of February, a third letter was published, and eagerly read by the wits of Paris, who by this time were looking forward from day to day for the delicious morsel. The writer is indignant at the censure which has just been pronounced. The Jansenists have been assailed by a storm of calumny for many years past. No accusation has been too bitter to be directed against them. Yet when their enemies have chosen their own opportunity to verify these charges, they bring forward, from all Arnauld's voluminous writings, only a single erroneous proposition concerning the faith. And this single proposition is one which can be expressed in the very words of such renowned fathers of the Church as St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom. What author is safe if M. Arnauld, on such a pretext, is to be excluded from the Sorbonne? Is not the very character of the prosecution a sufficient proof of his orthodoxy?

It is plain, then, to continue the thread of the argument, that the condemnation of Arnauld is altogether a personal matter. He is to be crushed, by whatever means. It will answer the purpose of the Jesuits if "the condemnation of the Jansenists" be only cried in the streets; the public will not take the trouble to examine the reasons

* Lett. Prov. p. 46.

of the sentence, or the means by which it has been procured. "I understood," he continues, "that here is a heresy of a new kind. The opinions of M. Arnauld are not heretical; it is himself. It is a personal heresy. He is not a heretic on account of anything he has said or written, but simply because he is M. Arnauld. This is all the fault they find in him. Do as he will, he will never cease to be a heretic; he will never become a good Catholic. The grace of St. Augustine will never be the true grace, so long as he defends it; it will become so, only if he should happen to assail it. That would be a sure blow; and perhaps the only means of establishing it, and destroying Molinism; so great a cause of misfortune is he to any opinion which he holds." *

The excitement produced by the first letter was great, and increased as each was successively issued. The little pamphlet of eight quarto pages was read in every salon; and almost for the first time the wits and ladies of Paris began to gain an insight into the great quarrel which raged in the Sorbonne. For it was the production of one who was no mere scholastic theologian, incapable of putting off the cumbrous panoply of his order; Pascal had been one of themselves not many months before, living in the house of the Duc de Roannez, and mingling in many of the diversions of the capital. The title, "Lettre écrite à un Provincial par un de ses amis," was soon familiarly abridged to "La Provinciale;" and, after a time, the letters were best known by the almost endearing name of "Les Petites Lettres." Who could have written them? Pascal's previous reputation had been that of a man of science; and no one at first appears to have thought of him. Was it Gomberville, one of Mademoiselle de Scuderi's coterie, and the author of some long-forgotten

* Lett. Prov. p. 59.

novels? Gomberville very unnecessarily wrote a letter to the president of a Jesuit college in Paris, disclaiming the authorship. Another suspicion pointed to M. le Roi, Abbé de Haute Fontaine, who also publicly cleared himself from it, professing however that the mention of his name in such a connexion was an honour which he did not deserve. After a time, the pseudonym of Louis de Montalte was affixed to the letters, while the third letter originally closed in this mysterious way:—"Je suis, monsieur, votre très humble, et très obéissant serviteur, E. A. A. B. P. A. F. D. E. P.," which critics have since interpreted to mean, "Et ancien ami, Blaise Pascal, Auvergnat, fils de Etienne Pascal." Still the secret was kept. When the letters were begun, Pascal lodged in a house near the Luxembourg. This, for the sake of greater secrecy, he quitted; and, assuming the name of M. de Mons, which had been borne by some of his maternal relatives, took up his abode in the heart of the enemy's country, at a little inn, at the sign of "King David," opposite the Jesuit College of Clermont, and just behind the Sorbonne. Here he lodged with his brother-in-law, M. Perier, who had lately come to Paris; and here, too, the latter was visited by Père Defretat, a Jesuit, and a distant relative, who came to tell him that the suspicions of the Society were beginning to point to Pascal as the author of the Provincial Letters. M. Perier, we may be sure, did not confide in him either that Pascal was living in the room below, or that behind the closed curtains of the bed, by the side of which they were talking, a score of fresh impressions of the seventh letter were laid out to dry.*

The vexation of the enemy may be easily conceived. The day before the censure was pronounced, the first letter was read in the dining hall of the Sorbonne, amusing

* Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 278. St^e. Beuve, vol. ii. p. 555.

some, and hugely irritating others of the learned auditory. M. Seguier, Chancellor of France, was so annoyed, that anger took the form of apoplexy, and he was let blood seven times in close succession. Charles Savreux, a printer and bookseller, who was supposed to be friendly to the Jansenists, was arrested on the 2nd February, but no trace of the obnoxious letters was discovered in his office. The two first letters, if not indeed the later ones, were printed by one Petit; and, report said, with a peculiar kind of ink, which dried rapidly, and thus facilitated hurried printing. On Petit's office, as well as on Savreux's seals were placed. The printer himself had prudently absconded, but his wife, warned of what was coming, boldly carried away the heavy forms of type under her apron, to a neighbour's house, where, that very night 300 copies of the second letter were printed, and 1200 more the next day. Early in the morning, one of her journeymen presented himself with the pamphlet wet from the press, at the house of the Premier President de Bellièvre. The President, not altogether unfavourable to the Jansenists, concluded, as he was intended to do, that the letters could not have been printed by Petit, and forthwith caused the seals to be removed. Perhaps this, joined to the fact that he ordered early copies of all the subsequent letters to be brought to him, is partly the reason why he is mentioned with honour in the eighth letter.*

The chief agent in thus deluding the police, was M. de St. Gilles d'Asson, whom we have already learned to know at Port Royal des Champs. At first the danger was great; but when the Provincial Letters began to expose the morality of the Jesuits, public opinion declared itself so clearly on the side of the anonymous assailant that the

* Gerberon, Hist. du Jansenisme, vol. ii. p. 286. Hist. des Provinciales (prefixed to Didot's ed.), p. 16. St^e. Beuve, vol. ii. pp. 549, 550.

risk rapidly diminished. Of each of the earlier letters 6000 copies were printed; half were distributed gratuitously; half were sold to two Jansenist booksellers, at a price which defrayed the cost of the whole impression. The booksellers in turn made a large profit on those which they sold; and every one, except the Jesuits, was satisfied. But the number of the edition was afterwards increased. Above 10,000 copies were printed of the seventeenth letter; while the earlier letters were so constantly reprinted, that the bibliographer is now at a loss to distinguish the *editio princeps*. They were sent to all parts of the kingdom; and the post-office, says a Jesuit author, never before made such profits. Meanwhile, M. de St. Gilles was the object of criminal proceedings on the part of the police, who however, failing to arrest him, were obliged to be satisfied with procuring a sentence of imprisonment against him, in his absence. But Cardinal Mazarin was assured by a friend of Port Royal, that the Petites Lettres contained nothing which could be construed into a defence of De Retz, and the conviction was reversed.*

Had the publication of the Provincial Letters ceased with the third, they might have been preserved in the libraries of the curious, as a lively contribution to an otherwise ponderous controversy, but would never have reached their present high position as a French classic. But in the letters from the fourth to the fifteenth, both inclusive, Pascal leaves the subtle disputes of grace and free will, to attack the corruptions of Jesuit morality, as set forth in the writings of the casuists. The sixteenth letter is a refutation of the long-repeated calumnies against Port Royal; the seventeenth and eighteenth again recur to the topics of the first three. I shall glance at each separately in the order of publication.

* St. Beuve, vol. ii. pp. 551, 554.

Nicole has left us an interesting account of the way in which Pascal was induced to adopt the system of offensive warfare against the enemies of Port Royal. His fourth letter forms a transition from the third to the fifth. "There is nothing like the Jesuits," it begins. "I have seen Jacobins, doctors, all sorts of people; but a visit to the Jesuits was necessary to complete my information. Others only copy them. Things are always worth most at their source."* So he describes, how he went to a Jesuit to inquire into their doctrine of grace; and how in the course of conversation he discovered, that their theories made a mortal sin so difficult to be committed, that it was one of the hardest things in the world to be damned. "When I was alone," he concludes, "with my Jansenist friend, I communicated to him my astonishment at the upturning of morality produced by this doctrine. To which he answered, that he was much astonished at my astonishment. Do you not know that their excesses in morality are much greater than in all other matters? He gave me strange examples of this, and postponed the rest to another occasion. I hope that what I shall learn will be the subject of our first conversation."† There is here a sort of half-promise that the topic of Jesuit morality should be pursued. But Pascal deliberated long before he resolved to fulfil it; and was still uncertain whether his enterprise would be to the advantage of the Church, when the perusal of Escobar, one of the most celebrated of the Jesuit casuists, roused all the moral indignation of his nature, and determined him to make the attempt. But the letters were no longer written with the ease and rapidity which marked the production of the first. The composition of a single letter was often the work of twenty days. Some he wrote and re-wrote six or

* Lett. Prov. p. 61. † Lett. Prov. p. 76.

seven times; the eighteenth, he is said to have re-written thirteen times. He apologises for the length of the sixteenth, on the ground that he had not had time to make it shorter. Nicole and Arnauld revised the letters, furnished him with facts and quotations, and it is said, even sketched the plan of the ninth, eleventh, and twelfth. But the clear style, the art of dialogue, the keen wit, the subtle irony, the nervous eloquence, the grave moral vehemence, were still Pascal's.*

The practical origin of what is known as "Casuistry," may perhaps be traced to the use of auricular confession. By the very nature of confession, and of the relation which it establishes between the director and his penitent, the former is called upon not only to balance conflicting duties, and to decide in difficult cases of conscience, but also to distinguish between venial and mortal sins; and beyond this to estimate with the minutest accuracy the relative magnitude of sins, in order to apportion to each a fit expiation of penance. But the centralising and regulating spirit of Rome forbade the abandonment of so [illegible] task to the judgment of the individual con- [illegible]d treatises were composed for his guidance, laying [illegible]rtain general rules, by help of which the moral quality of actions might be distinguished. Little by little, the practical wants of the Church elevated the consideration of cases of conscience into a distinct branch of theology, which was cultivated, especially in Spain, with great assiduity, through the latter half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. As the number of the casuists increased, the supposed cases to which their rules were made to apply became almost countless; till at last there was scarcely an emergency of human life, to which a parallel might not be found in their voluminous works.

* Vie de Nicole, p. 53. Nicole, quoted by St^e. Beuve, vol. iii. p. 36.

Those who are accustomed to ethical speculations will easily understand how fine a web of distinctions and limitations the casuists wove over the simple fundamental ideas of right and wrong. There is the obvious distinction between subjective and objective morality; between the intention and the act; between the morality of the motive and the consequence of the deed. It is possible to look at morality, and to frame a whole system of ethics, from either point of view. What are we to say of a harmful act committed with a pure intention? what of a wrong intention which circumstance never permitted to ripen into act? There is the plain principle that a man cannot offend against a law of whose teaching he is ignorant: who shall decide in a given case what ignorance is wilful, and what inevitable? what imperfect, and what complete? Nor, once more, can any man be rightly blamed for any action which he does not perform of his own free will. But what constitutes compulsion? what degree of compulsion of the actor is necessary to render the act innocent? To what extent are we to resist the wrong before we can blamelessly yield to it? The answers to these and many other questions, introduce innumerable theoretical distinctions, which, multiplied again by all the possible emergencies to which they may be applied, produce the labyrinth of "cases of conscience," which fill the books of the casuists.

Casuistry is a word which has an ill sound in Protestant ears. It is associated with ideas of practical moral laxity; of ministers of religion busied in finding excuses, rather than in forging reproofs for sin; of an ethical system, accommodating itself not to the eternal necessities of God's law, but to the petty exigencies of human life. And this is the inevitable tendency of any system which aims at enforcing right and prohibiting wrong by the enumeration of all possible cases, and not by the inculcation of the few great principles. Thus it is a true and universal reproach against

all national law, which necessarily proceeds on this principle, that its administration often carries out rather the letter of the enactment than the spirit of the legislator. Thus in a case more analogous to that of the casuists, the result of the Pharisees' attempt to supply the omissions of the precise ceremonial law by the still more precise teaching of tradition, was the neglect of weighty matters, "justice, mercy, truth," for the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin. The majesty of duty, the awfulness of sin, can be fully apprehended only by the conscience which seeks to understand them by meditating on the ample precepts of Christianity. When the soul is fully possessed by the love of God, and the aspiration after a divine perfectness, the meanest duty becomes august, the most trifling sin grows terrible. But when, balance in hand, we set ourselves to weigh the minimum of duty which we think will enable us to escape punishment — the maximum of indulgence which shall not amount to transgression;—when the conscience is taught to occupy itself in finding byways of escape from obligation, and in devising excuses which take its sinful character from sin — the inevitable result is a general lowering of the ethical standard, and practical abandonment of the simplicity of Christian morals. It is fair to say that neither casuistry as a system, nor some of its most characteristic and dangerous principles, were of Jesuit invention. But they were too congenial to the spirit of the Society not to be eagerly caught up and adapted to its uses; so that posterity is less unjust than it sometimes is in practically identifying the morals of casuistry with those of the Jesuits. So at least thought Pascal, and so, too, the good fathers, when he made them responsible for the morals of the casuists, and they took no steps to evade the responsibility. Sanchez, Less, Busenbaum, Suarez, Escobar, names once famous in the theological world, were all Jesuits, and all writers on casuistry. A work of Busenbaum's, the "Medulla Casuum Conscientiæ," passed through

fifty-two editions. Escobar's "Theologia Moralis" was reprinted forty times.* When we recollect the strict obligations of obedience by which the Society was held together; the impossibility that any Jesuit should publish a work not formally approved by his superiors; and the fact that the writings of the casuists gave the tone to all Jesuit morality, we shall not be inclined to think that Pascal was mistaken in demanding an account from the whole body for the immoral speculations of its members.

His view of the matter is, that the Jesuits "have a sufficiently good opinion of themselves to believe that it is useful, not to say necessary, to the good of religion, that their reputation should be everywhere diffused, and that they should govern all consciences." On this account, they acknowledge and use the writings of the more severe casuists, as well as of the others. To please every one, they must have moral rules of all sorts. The pious will be disgusted with a low morality, and so must meet with a rigid standard of right. The worldly will recoil from a severe aspect of religion, and must be accommodated with a milder guidance. All must be subjected to the in[illegible] of the Society. "Thus," he continues, "they keep a[illegible] friends, and defend themselves against all their ene[illegible] For if you reproach them with their extreme laxity, they immediately produce to the public their austere confessors, with certain books which they have written upon the rigour of the Christian law; and simple people, and those who do not go to the bottom of things, are content with this evidence." † So, too, even yet, the cry is raised against the Provincial Letters—what have not the Jesuits done in India, in China, in Paraguay? Is it possible to believe that the Society which has produced missionaries of Christianity so brave, so faithful, so self-sacrificing, which has sent forth

* Hallam: Lit. Hist. vol. iii. p. 138.

† Prov. Lett. pp. 79, 80.

to all barbarian shores so many martyrs for Christ, should yet countenance principles which involve the subversion of his moral law? Must it not be the pure truth of God for which men live so hardly, and die so cheerfully? To which it is necessary to reply only, that it is a happy thing if, while the Jesuit theory and practice of morals are in Europe so low, they are beyond the sea so noble. It is idle to attempt to infer the character of one from the character of the other. No society could maintain itself at the moral height of St. Francis Xavier; no society could practically degrade itself to the level of Escobar. Perhaps the extinction of all individual responsibility in the one duty of implicit obedience, is the reason why among the Jesuits human nature ranges through a longer than its usual scale of inconsistency. Nevertheless, if the apologists of the Society call our attention to the facts of missionary devotion on the one side, it may be allowed us to remember that the theoretical laxity of the casuists, the defence of regicide under Henry IV., the destruction of Port Royal under Louis XIV., are no less facts on the other.

It is not my intention to follow Pascal closely through his eleven letters on the Jesuit morality. In the first three letters, which I have briefly analysed, his subject was the controversy in which the Port Royalists were engaged, and which it was necessary that my readers should understand. Now his theme is not so intimately connected with our own, and we have to do rather with the practical results of his argument than with the manner in which it was conducted. Yet a few words to indicate his line of attack, may not be without interest.

In the fifth letter, he goes to a Jesuit father, skilled in casuistry, to inquire if the accusations which he has heard against the moral theories of the Society are true. And, before long, he engages his informant in a disquisition on the famous theory of probability. There are many casuists

of repute who have given their opinions on specified cases of conscience. The opinions of different casuists on a particular case may be different or even contradictory. But the opinion of every one of these learned men must be at least probably true; for he would not have enunciated it without reasons which appeared to him sufficient. Much more is this the case, if two or more casuists agree in the same opinion. And a probable opinion is one which a Christian may lawfully adopt, and act upon. If he acts upon a probable opinion, his confessor is bound to absolve him from the consequences of his act. No man is obliged to balance probabilities, or to take the opinion of the majority of casuists, rather than of the minority; he may adopt the opinion which suits him best, provided he can find a single authority for it. And as, of course, it will frequently happen that one casuist says one thing, and another precisely the contrary, it follows that a man is justified in taking whichever course he pleases. The troublesome ideas of right and wrong are thus entirely eliminated from the sphere of action. Another great feature of casuistical morality, which Pascal discusses in the seventh letter, is the method of directing intention, "the importance of which in our system of morals," says the Jesuit, "is so great, that I should almost venture to compare it to the doctrine of probability." To take away the sinfulness from a sinful act, all we have to do is to direct our intention, in the performance of it, towards a lawful object. Are we going to fight a duel? The desire of vengeance is criminal; let us direct our intention to the defence of personal honour, which is lawful. Do we wish to buy a benefice and are fearful of being involved in the sin of simony? Let us not pay our money as the price of the benefice, but direct our intention to give it to the incumbent as a motive which shall induce him to resign in our favour. Are we, as servants, commanded by

our masters to assist in the perpetration of some crime? Let us direct our intention away from the sin to our wages, and we are safe. Once more we have a method which will supply whatever defects may belong to the doctrine of probability, and make the path of right easy to the tenderest feet. Some of my readers may have already called to mind Tartufe's way of reconciling his amorous overtures to his host's wife with his ostentatious sanctity. Le Tartufe is the true offspring of Les Provinciales:—

> Je vous puis dissiper ces craintes ridicules,
> Madame, et je sais l'art de lever les scrupules:
> Le ciel défend, de vrai, certains contentements,
> Mais on trouve, avec lui, des accommodements:
> Selon divers besoins, il est une science
> D'étendre les liens de notre conscience:
> Et de rectifier le mal de l'action,
> Avec la pureté de notre intention:
> De ces secrets, madame, on saura vous instruire,
> Vous n'avez seulement qu'à vous laisser conduire.
>
> ACT. IV. *Sc.* 5.

These two great principles are not barren of practical result. With the help of others, less general in their operation, such as the interpretation of terms, and due allowance for circumstances, they empty every sin, in turn, of its sinfulness, and deprive every duty of its obligation. If servants are in conscience dissatisfied with their wages, they may make up the deficiency out of their master's property. It is not sinful to wish for the death of our enemies; and a son, taking care to direct his intention properly, may even desire his father's death. Duelling and assassination are innocent in many conceivable cases. We may kill anyone who strikes us, who gives us the lie, who slanders us, who insults us with a scornful gesture. An ecclesiastic may lawfully get rid of those who threaten to publish the scandalous crimes of the community to which he belongs. We may kill a thief, always provided that

he has stolen a crown's worth of our property. Judges may take bribes, and of course may decide causes according to the principle of probability. The obligation of truth-telling is destroyed by the lawful use of equivocation and mental reservation: promises may be kept and broken at pleasure. Calumny is a legitimate weapon against those who speak ill of us. Is it wonderful that, at the end of the tenth letter, when Pascal, by the help of his Jesuit father, has extracted all these precepts from the works of the casuists, he should break forth in a torrent of indignant eloquence, which closes against him the doors of his too confiding teacher?

Accordingly, in the eleventh letter, the thin veil of disguise, which had hitherto been worn, is dropped; Louis de Montalte no longer writes to his friend in the country, but addresses himself directly to the Jesuit fathers. They had complained that he used weapons of ridicule in a controversy upon sacred things; he reminds them that "there is a wide difference between laughing at religion, and laughing at those who profane it by their extravagant opinions," and proceeds to define the limits within which the use of wit and satire is lawful, as well as to prove that he has not exceeded them. Then once more he carries the war into the enemy's country, and reminds them of the miserable attempts at wit, with which certain Jesuit fathers, among others the unlucky Garasse, had insulted the sacred subjects, of which they had treated. But the Society had not henceforth much raillery to expect from Pascal. Every letter now to the end is full of clear, close reasoning, and vehement invective, exchanged sometimes for bitter sarcasm, but rarely relieved by gleams of humour or fancy. With every letter his voice assumes a deeper and a sterner tone. "The best comedies of Molière," says Voltaire, "have not more wit than the first Provincial Letters: Bossuet has nothing more sublime

than the later ones."* The key note is at first struck from the salons where the wits congregate; but the harmonies grow graver and more solemn, till we seem to sit beneath the pulpit of Port Royal.

The twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth letters go over much the same ground as those which had preceded them. The Jesuits had issued replies to the first letters, accusing the author of misrepresentation, and of wilful inexactness of quotation. Now therefore he repeats every blow which he had inflicted, deepening by his indignant eloquence the wounds which his sharp sarcasm had made before. Almsgiving and simony are the subjects of the twelfth letter; homicide of the thirteenth and fourteenth; calumny of the fifteenth. He shows conclusively, not only by citations from Jesuit casuists, but by instances of Jesuit persecution, that slander was a weapon which they used, and justified themselves in using against their enemies. Then in the sixteenth letter, he turns to the specific slanders which they had propagated against Port Royal. It was a time when bold speech was necessary and noble. That very year the assembly of the French clergy had ordered to be burned an eulogium upon the Petrus Aurelius, whom they had once recognised as their champion. The year before, the monument of the Bishop of Ypres had been shamefully torn down. So Pascal indignantly repels, one by one, the wild accusations of Calvinism and heresy which had been brought against the ecclesiastics and sisters of Port Royal, till at last the flame of his righteous wrath growing hotter and hotter as he proceeds, he breaks forth into the celebrated apostrophe: —"Cruel and cowardly persecutors! cannot the most secluded cloister be an asylum against your slanders? While these holy virgins, day and night, according to their rule,

* Siècle de Louis XIV. vol. ii. p. 355.

worship Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, you cease not day and night to publish that they do not believe in Him, either in the Eucharist, or at the Father's right hand. Publicly you cut them off from the Church, while in secret they pray for all the Church and for you. You slander those who have neither ears to hear, nor tongue to answer you. But Jesus Christ, in whom they are hidden, that they may one day appear with Him, hears you and answers for them. We hear now that terrible and holy voice, which astounds all nature and consoles the Church.* And I fear, my fathers, that those who harden their hearts and obstinately refuse to hear Him, when He speaks as their God, will be compelled to listen to Him with terror, when He shall address them as their Judge." †

The seventeenth and eighteenth letters are addressed to Père Annat, who, in December, 1656, had published a pamphlet in reply to the first letters. ‡ They are longer and less interesting than any of their predecessors, being chiefly devoted to proving that no heresy called Jansenism existed in the Church; that the difference between the Jansenists and the Holy See was only on a matter of fact; and that the question of fact was quite separable from the question of faith. It is important to mention this, because, as we shall presently find, Pascal afterwards saw reason to modify, if not to reject, this opinion.

The last Provincial Letter is dated March 24th, 1657; so that the time occupied by the publication of the whole was about fourteen months. They were immediately collected, and published by the printer in a quarto volume, which is recognised by bibliographers as the first edition. Two 12mo. editions, published by the Elzevirs in the same year, and

* Alluding to the miracle of the Holy Thorn. Vide next chapter.

† Lett. Prov. p. 309.

‡ Gerberon, vol. ii. p. 323.

a fourth in 8vo., printed at Cologne in 1659, attest the eagerness with which the book was sought. The impression last mentioned received Pascal's final corrections.

At the same time no book could be said to have gained an European reputation which had not been translated into Latin, the universal language of the learned. This good office Nicole prepared to perform for the Provincial Letters. In order to acquire the grave and nervous latinity requisite for the successful performance of his task, he is said to have read repeatedly all the plays of Terence. His work was published at Cologne in 1658, accompanied by a preface and notes, answering the criticism of the Jesuits, and furnishing fresh proofs and illustrations of Pascal's statements.* The assumed name of the translator was Wilhelm Wendrock, Doctor of Theology in the University of Salzburg. The book met with great success, running rapidly through six editions, and exciting a storm of controversy for itself, quite distinct from that which still raged in Paris. Great, though unsuccessful efforts were made to induce the parliament of Bourdeaux to condemn it. At Paris, the Jesuits were more successful; for on the 14th October, 1860, the book was burned by the hands of the common hangman. †

It is not, however, to be supposed that so hot an assault upon the Society as that made by Pascal, was allowed to pass without reply or rejoinder. The first weapon used against the unknown enemy was the heavy club of unscrupulous assertion: "He was a heretic," said Père Annat, "and to say so fifteen times was all the answer which his fifteen letters needed or deserved." ‡ But this was not a dispute where assertion would pass for argument; the public had been thoroughly informed of the facts; they had read for

* Nicole's notes and dissertations were translated into French, as late as the year 1700, by Madlle. de Joncoux. Ste. Beuve, vol. iii. p. 154.

† Vie de Nicole, chap. vi. p. 69, *et seq.*

‡ Gerberon, vol. ii. p. 328.

themselves the extracts from the casuists; and they wanted to know whether these things really were so. The curés, the working clergy of Paris and of Rouen, shocked at the disgrace brought upon the Church, took up the matter warmly. Those of the latter city appointed a committee to investigate the accuracy of Pascal's quotations; and having thus satisfied themselves that they were on firm ground, appealed to their archbishop. He referred the appeal to the general assembly of clergy in Paris. The curés of Paris adopted a similar proceeding; and the Assembly, unwilling to decide against the Jesuits, yet unable to disregard the strong requisition which was made to them, excused themselves from going into so complicated a matter on the ground that they were about to separate, and ordered to be printed, as a guide to confessors, and as an antidote to any real or alleged errors of the casuists, the instructions of St. Charles Borromeo.

At this moment an unlucky Jesuit, Père Pirot, issued an apology for the casuists, in which he defended everything. The scandal of this was too great to be borne. The Sorbonne condemned the apology. A host of prelates followed the example of the Sorbonne An appeal was made to Rome, where the Provincial Letters had, in 1657, been placed in the Index Expurgatorius. The Holy See would surely, it was thought, decide favourably for the refutation of the obnoxious book. But this last hope was also disappointed, and in 1659, Père Pirot was sent to keep company with Pascal in the Index. Meanwhile the debate had not failed to call forth the wonted swarm of pamphlets, which are remarkable, chiefly because the curés of Paris invoked the help of more efficient pens than their own. Arnauld, Nicole, Pascal, all took part in producing what are called the Facta des Curés de Paris. The second and fifth Facta were written by Pascal alone; and the fifth, in which he makes an elaborate comparison between the

Jesuits and the Calvinists, giving the preference to the latter, was regarded by himself the best of his writings.*

Pirot died, they say, of grief and vexation. Pascal wrote among his papers, which chance and loving editors have brought to light but yesterday, "If my letters are condemned at Rome, what I condemn in them is condemned in heaven. Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello." †

What shall we say of the truthfulness of Pascal's attack upon the casuistical morality? I believe it is Count Joseph de Maistre who has called the Provincial Letters "the immortal liars." Chateaubriand repeats the same thought when he says, "Pascal is only a calumniator of genius; he has left us an immortal lie." ‡ Even as late as 1851, an edition of the Provincial Letters, accompanied by a refutation of their misstatements, was published by M. L'Abbé Maynard. Yet it is a singular fact that this should remain to be done in 1851; a still more singular fact, that the only work which could till then be quoted in opposition to Pascal, namely, the "Entretiens de Cleandre et d'Eudoxe" of Père Daniel, was not published till 1694, and made no impression upon public opinion.§ From the fight itself, the Jesuits retired, almost without striking a blow. Their great adversary had been dead for thirty years before they ventured to lift up their voice against him, except in the ineffectual pamphlets of Annat and Pirot. The curés of Paris and of Rouen were, as a body, free from the suspicion of Jansenism: Escobar was reprinted that they might have

* Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 280. Vie de Nicole, p. 55. Hist. des Provinciales, p. 17, *et seq.* Ste. Beuve, vol. iii. p. 135, *et seq.*

† Pensées, ed. Havet, p. 342.

‡ Quoted by l'Abbé Maynard "Pascal," vol. i. p. 271.

§ Ste. Beuve (vol. iii. p. 152) tells us that Père Daniel's work was read by some of the exiles at the dull court of St. Germains. But what was chiefly relished in it were the copious quotations from Pascal, which made the readers of Père Daniel eager to procure and peruse the forbidden book. Not an unusual fate of refutations!

the facts of the case before them: why should they have decided so strongly in favour of Pascal? The bishops were notoriously not Jansenist: why should they so universally have condemned Pirot? It is possible enough that instances of inaccurate quotation may be proved against Pascal. He translates, he abridges, and no two men, especially if they be under the opposing influence of religious prepossession, will translate and abridge in quite the same words. But that he was guilty of wilful suppression and misrepresentation, only a Jesuit, or the pupil of a Jesuit, will believe. His stern conscientiousness and hearty devotion to the Catholic Church alike forbid the supposition. And that he did not erroneously state the characteristic method of the casuists, is sufficiently proved by the fact, that the Provincial Letters were a death-blow to casuistry.*

A report was circulated after Pascal's death, that he regretted having written the Provincial Letters. Another story was, that in answer to a question from Madame de Sablé, he had thrown all responsibility for the accuracy of his quotations upon those who had furnished him with his materials—that is, upon Arnauld and Nicole. A full refutation of these rumours is found in a remarkable paper which was preserved by his niece Marguerite Périer, and which contains a statement made about a year before his death. He had been asked whether he had repented of his share in the Provincial Letters. "1st. I answer that, so far from repenting, if I had to write them again I would make them stronger. 2nd. I have been asked why I gave the names of the authors from whom I took all the abomin-

* It is singular that the word escobarder, to equivocate, has found its way into the French language and maintains its place there. M. Victor Cousin does not include it in his vocabulary of phrases peculiar to Pascal, who, however, did speak of "des mœurs escobartines;" which one of his editors, Bossut, has emasculated into "des mœurs licencieuses."

able propositions there quoted. I answer, that if I were in a town where there were twelve fountains, and knew certainly that one of them was poisoned, I should be obliged to warn everybody not to draw any more water at that fountain; and as people might believe that it was only a fancy of mine, I should be obliged to name the poisoner, rather than expose a whole town to destruction. 3rd. I have been asked why I wrote in an amusing, agreeable, ironical style. I answer, that if I had written dogmatically, only the learned would have read my book, who, as they know at least as much about the matter as I do, have no need of it; therefore, I thought it necessary to write my letters in such a style as should induce women and men of the world to read them, in order that they might know the danger of all those maxims and propositions which were then current, and of the truth of which people suffered themselves to be easily persuaded. 4th. I have been asked, if I have myself read all the books which I have quoted. I answer, no. If I had done so, I must have passed a great part of my life in reading very bad books, but I have read Escobar twice through, and I have employed some of my friends in reading the others. But I have not made use of a single passage without having myself read it in the book from which it is cited, without having examined the subject of which it treats, and without having read what went before and followed, so that I might run no risk of quoting an objection as an answer, which would have been blameworthy and unfair."*

Another accusation which has been again and again repeated by the enemies of the Provincial Letters, and I think too feebly rebutted by their friends, is that Pascal there set an example of employing raillery in matters of religion, which has been followed with fatal effect. None

* Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 279.

but a Jesuit will complain that Le Tartufe followed Les Provinciales; but Pascal was also the forerunner of Voltaire. Gibbon expressly tells us where he acquired his power of suppressed ridicule and artful insinuation. "From the Provincial Letters of Pascal," he says in his memoirs *, "which almost every year I have perused with new pleasure, I learned to manage the weapon of grave and temperate irony, even on subjects of ecclesiastical solemnity." For the full discussion of this matter I must refer the reader to Pascal's eleventh letter. Then, as ever since, his opponents felt the keenness of his sword, and uttered an ineffectual protest against the use of steel. So unlearned controversialists doubt the utility of learning; so slow-tongued disputants deprecate the appeal to open debate. It is not true that Pascal was the first to employ wit and humour in religious controversies. Men to whom God has given wit and humour have always employed those faculties in whatever controversies they have conducted. The only question open to discussion is whether Pascal used his powers rightly; whether he laughed at what was venerable or directed the shafts of his sarcasm at what was holy and true. And he is free from blame, if, as I believe, the whole force of his genius was employed against the unholy and the untrue; if his book lifted a veil from the consciences of men, and enabled them to see clearly the boundaries of right and wrong, which the casuists had subtly sought to hide. Perhaps, after all, the morality of the Jesuits and the dogmatic decisions of the Church had more to do with Voltaire's scorn and Gibbon's irony, than the example of Pascal. One was born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, the other fled in youth to her arms; what did they learn there, to make them the enemies of Christianity?

The attestations to the surpassing merits of the Pro-

* Misc. works, ed. Sheffield, vol. i. p. 96.

vincial Letters are numerous and high. I have already quoted words of commendation from Voltaire. Another well known passage in the Age of Louis XIV., contains his opinion as to their influence on the French language, as well as the emphatic praise of Bossuet.

"The first book of genius, written in prose, was the collection of the Provincial Letters in 1656. Every species of eloquence is there to be found. There is not a single word in them, which, after the lapse of one hundred years, has been affected by the changes which are continually taking place in living languages. This work must be considered as forming the epoch at which the French language was fixed. The Bishop of Luçon, son of the celebrated Bussy, has told me that on his asking M. de Meaux what book next to his own, he would choose to have written, Bossuet answered, 'The Provincial Letters.'" *

Madame de Sevigné, assuredly no mean judge of style, writes to her daughter, on Dec. 21st, 1689. "Sometimes to amuse ourselves, we read the Provincial Letters; bon Dieu! how charming they are! and how my son reads them! . . . . Is it possible to have a more perfect style, an irony finer, more delicate, more natural, more worthy of the dialogues of Plato, which are so beautiful? And when after the first ten letters, he addresses himself to the Reverend Fathers, what seriousness of tone! what force! what solidity, what eloquence, what love for God and for truth! what a method of maintaining and expounding the truth! — all this is to be found in the eight last letters, which are in quite a different key to the first!"

One more testimony, that of Boileau, is worth quoting, both for its intrinsic value, and for the charming setting in which Madame de Sevigné has placed it. She writes on the 15th Jan. 1690:—"*Apropos* of Corbinelli — he wrote me the other day a very pleasant letter, giving an account of a

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV. vol. ii. p. 253.

dinner and conversation at the house of M. de Lamoignon; the actors were the people of the house, M. de Troyes, M. de Toulon, Père Bourdaloue, his companion, Despréaux and Corbinelli. The conversation turned on ancient and modern literature. Despréaux took the side of the ancients, always excepting a single modern author, who, to his taste, surpassed both ancients and moderns. The companion of Bourdaloue, who was listening, and had attached himself to Despréaux and Corbinelli, asked him what was this book, on which he set so high a value? Despréaux would not tell him. Corbinelli added his entreaties to those of the Jesuit, and begged Despréaux to name the book, that he might sit up all night to read it. Despréaux answered with a laugh, 'Ah Monsieur, you have read it more than once, I assure you.' The Jesuit rejoins with an air of disdain, and presses Despréaux to name this marvellous author. Despréaux says to him, 'My father, do not press me.' The Jesuit continues. At last Despréaux takes him by the arm, and pinching it tightly, says to him, 'My father, you *will* have it: well then, *morbleu*, 'tis Pascal.' 'Pascal!' cried the Jesuit, quite red and astonished, 'Pascal is as fine as falsehood can be.' 'Falsehood!' replied Despréaux, 'falsehood! know that the book is as true as it is inimitable: it has just been translated into three languages.' The father answers, 'That does not make it any truer.' Despréaux grows hot, and shouts like a madman, 'What, my father, will you tell me that a member of your company has not printed in one of his books "that a Christian is not obliged to love God?" Do you dare to say *that* is false?' 'Monsieur,' said the Jesuit in a rage, 'we must distinguish.' 'Distinguish,' cried Despréaux, 'distinguish, *morbleu!* distinguish if we are obliged to love God!' and taking Corbinelli by the arm, he fled to the other end of the room; then coming back, and running like a madman,

would not go near the Jesuit, but went to rejoin the rest of the company who had remained in the dining-room. Here the story finishes, and the curtain falls."

With this lively morsel of criticism, we too will let the curtain fall. After the opinions of Voltaire, Bossuet, Boileau, De Sevigné, who is qualified to pronounce judgment?

VI.

From 1642 to 1654, La Mère Angélique, in virtue of four successive re-elections, presided over the two communities of Port Royal. I have already recorded many of the events of this period; the temporary abandonment of both houses during the wars of the Fronde; the erection of the church of Port Royal de Paris; the complete restoration of the conventual buildings of Port Royal des Champs. To complete this narrative, and to bring ourselves to the level of the Provincial Letters, I have now to enumerate the signs and causes of the approaching storm of persecution, which, while the Five Propositions were being debated, and the censure prepared for Antoine Arnauld, was gathering about the heads of the sisterhood.

We have already traced to its origin the personal feud between Port Royal and the Jesuits. The literary success of the "Livre de la Fréquente Communion," as well as its virtual triumph at Rome, did not make the name of Arnauld less hateful in the ears of the Society; while the reputation gradually acquired by the schools of Port Royal, roused them to a fear of rivalry in a field hitherto peculiarly their own. Themselves held together by vows of the most rigid obedience, and animated by a spirit of policy as deep as it was subtle, they did not hesitate to ascribe to their antagonists an organisation as complete, political ends as secret, as their own. The wars of the Fronde supplied them with the materials of slander. De Retz, nephew and coadjutor of De Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, was the Arch-Frondeur; the man, who of all living men, Mazarin most feared and hated. But the

Gondis, who had possessed the see of Paris for some forty years, had always shown themselves friendly to Port Royal; De Retz, in particular, did not care enough for religion to be animated by any theological rancour, and acknowledged the excellence of virtues which he was little disposed to emulate. On the other hand Port Royal, indebted to uncle and nephew for many acts of justice and protection, not unnaturally disbelieved or overlooked the faults of the latter; helped him in his time of trouble, and acknowledged his episcopal authority as long as it was lawful. What more easy, therefore, than to alarm the timid Cardinal with tales of the disloyalty of Port Royal? to persuade him that the house of Paris was the focus of the exiled coadjutor's intrigues? to instil into his mind the idea that the community of Port Royal des Champs was an illegal and treasonable association, where forty of the ablest writers of the day combined to overthrow the existing constitution in church and state? Such were the accusations which, in 1654, called forth the justificatory memoir from Le Maître, which I have already quoted. Such perhaps were the ideas which rankled in the mind of Louis XIV., and impelled him, after the lapse of nearly sixty years, to the final destruction of the monastery. How consonant they were with fact, the reader is able to judge for himself. There was, indeed a time, at which the friends of Port Royal were compelled to form themselves into a party. External pressure must end in converting chance association into mutual organisation. But the period, when more of worldly wisdom mingled in the councils of Port Royal, than perhaps St. Cyran or Singlin would have approved, is not arrived. And when it comes, the unvaried loyalty of persecuted, banished men to the church which oppressed, and the king who exiled them, will seem strange to English eyes.

The prosperity of the community, never so great as at

the period immediately preceding the persecution, and the influence which it began to acquire with persons of rank and eminence, were alone sufficient to stir up slanderous tongues. But the success of Singlin's preaching at Port Royal de Paris, was perhaps the greatest cause of Jesuit envy. The success had come naturally, and without solicitation; he preached only in the convent chapel, where the ceremonial was of the simplest, and where no inducements were offered to fashionable devotion. But in a little while the chapel was full; then the new church was full in its turn; the street was blocked up with carriages, and hardly a week passed but some new penitent submitted himself to the great director. He was hardly what would be called an eloquent preacher, especially by those whose ideas of French preaching are drawn from the sermons of Bourdaloue or Massillon. But he was the precursor of these great orators, in being among the first to banish the classics from the pulpit, and to preach the Gospel with a simplicity and a directness akin to its own. He was not even a man of profound or original thought. He was too much occupied with the practical duties of his office to have time for the preparation of sermons. So he communicated to Arnauld or De Saçi the subject and the text on which he wished to preach, and they furnished the thoughts which he, on the inspiration of the moment, clothed in words. It was his gravity and earnestness that made him the great preacher he undoubtedly was; the depth and vitality of conviction with which he announced the message of God to the souls for whom it was designed. Every one who heard him, says one auditor, believed that the sermon was addressed to himself alone.* No casual conversation, says another, passed from mouth to mouth, as the congregation left the church; every one was occu-

* Ste. Marthe, quoted by Ste. Beuve, vol. i. p. 481.

pied in meditating upon the practical truths of Christianity which he had just heard, and the method of applying them to his life.* But if all other evidence were wanting, Singlin's reputation as a preacher might rest upon the single fact of the conversion of Pascal.

This prosperity was not, however, uninterrupted. On St. Augustine's day, 1649, about the time when Cornet had submitted the Seven Propositions to the judgment of the Sorbonne, Singlin preached to a worshipful audience, including the Duc de Liancourt, the Maréchal de Schomberg, no fewer than five bishops, and many other notables. The day, the controversy, the known opinions of the preacher, all concurred to make any allusion to the doctrine of grace, hazardous. Singlin uttered some words which were caught up by unfriendly listeners, and reported to the Archbishop, then taking his ease at a distance from Paris. The result was, that a mandate was issued on the 22nd of September, forbidding Singlin to preach at Port Royal de Paris or anywhere within the diocese. Port Royal was greatly dismayed; Angélique, and the offending preacher, both expostulated with the Archbishop in vain. For some time no sermons were preached in the abbey church; the Archbishop would not permit Singlin, Angélique would not suffer any other preacher, to occupy the pulpit. At last, the representation of many who had been accustomed to hear Singlin, and especially of the Archbishop's brother, the Père de Gondi, who had heard the offending sermon, prevailed; on the first of January, 1650, Singlin once more assumed his place at Port Royal, and the Archbishop sealed the reconciliation by himself attending and approving the first sermon.*

During all the years through which the Jansenist con-

* Du Fossé, p. 94.

† Fontaine, vol. ii. p. 281, *et seq.* 293. Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 70. Lettres de la M. Ang. vol. i. pp. 363, 375, 432, 447.

troversy raged, Port Royal was the constant mark for calumny. Now it was intriguing with De Retz; now it was in league with Cromwell; now it was one at heart with Geneva.* The strange representations made to the public respecting the Jansenists, says Pascal in his Third Provincial Letter†, were matters of many years' standing. Formerly they were reproached with all manner of cabals, factions, errors, schisms, conspiracies. Now slander had grown bolder; the Jansenists "were publicly and openly accused of being not only heretics and schismatics, but apostates and infidels; of denying the mystery of transubstantiation, and of renouncing Jesus Christ and the Gospel." In 1652, these calumnies were repeated, and many more asserted in a bold but still premature attack made upon Port Royal, by a Jesuit Father, Brisacier. His work, entitled "Le Jansenisme Confondu," was primarily directed against M. Callaghan, a priest, apparently of Irish descent, who had been placed by Madame d'Aumont, at Cour Chiverny, near Blois. Brisacier has earned a doubtful immortality, like the poetasters in the Dunciad, by giving occasion to some of Pascal's most indignant rhetoric. He had called the sisters of Port Royal, by names, some of which it is not easy to translate: "Filles impénitentes, asacramentaires, incommuniantes, des vierges folles, fantastiques, Callaghanes, désespérées."‡ They had no images in their church; they addressed no prayers to the saints. The confessors of the community "practised novelties in confession to entrap the beautiful and the innocent, while the abominable crimes which they commit would be horrible to relate." Brisacier's book was condemned by the Archbishop; and its author made rector of the Jesuit College at Rouen by

* Lettres de la M. Ang. vol. ii. pp. 435, 468.

† Lett. Prov. p. 51.

‡ Prov. Lett. p. 205.

the Society.* Side by side with him, Pascal gibbets another Jesuit, Père Meynier, who was not ashamed to issue a book with the absurd title, "Le Port Royal d'intelligence avec Genève contre le saint sacrement de l'autel," directed against a community, one of whose peculiarities was the unceasing adoration of the Eucharist. "Tell me then, my father, if you can," says Pascal†, "why of all the mysteries of our religion they should have left on one side those in which they believe, to choose that in which they do not believe? Why they should be so fully and entirely devoted to this mystery of our faith, if they hold it, like the heretics, to be the mystery of iniquity? How do you answer, my father, such plain testimonies, not only of words, but of actions, and not of single actions merely, but of the whole course of a life entirely consecrated to the adoration of Jesus Christ in his presence upon our altars?" But calumny is always prompt to assert, always slow to answer; and the Jesuits made no reply.

At the beginning of the year 1654, Port Royal lost a friend in De Gondi, Archbishop of Paris. His nephew and coadjutor, De Retz, whose right it was to succeed to the see, was a proscribed politician, and for a time, the business of the diocese was transacted by deputy. And in November of the same year, Angélique resigned for the last time that pre-eminence in the community, which she had so long held, and so often wished to lay down. La Mère Marie des Anges Suireau, who had succeeded Angélique as Abbess of Maubuisson — a benefice which she had held for twenty-two years, and resigned that she might return to the beloved Port Royal,— was elected in her stead. Meanwhile the controversy of the Five Propositions had run its course to its termination in Innocent X.'s bull. Angélique did

* Racine, Hist. de P. R. p. 368.

† Prov. Lett. xvi. p. 291.

not pretend, she said, to understand the propositions. She was content with that saying of our Lord, that without Him we can do nothing; and of the Apostle, that of ourselves we cannot even utter the holy name of Jesus. Her submission to the Pope was entire, though she relied upon the report of the deputies to Rome, that the Holy Father had condemned the Propositions only in an heretical sense, and by no means in that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas.* "Submission," she says, "is every one's duty; but especially that of nuns like ourselves, who cannot dispute and argue; and who, as we have only to serve God in silence and the practice of our rule, would be doubly criminal if we did not submit. I can assure you that with exception of myself, who, by reason of my office, am obliged sometimes to speak with persons outside, and thus to hear what is said, not one of our sisters knows anything of the matter."† Thus in the same spirit writes La Mère Agnès:—"I advise you not to trouble yourself at all about the bull, any more than do we, who are by no means disquieted by it. We condemn what it condemns, without knowing what that is; it is enough for us to know that the Pope has issued it, and that as daughters of the Church, we are obliged to respect all the decrees of the Holy See."‡ In 1654 the King was eagerly solicited to disperse the Hermit community, and though the blow was for a time deferred, none at Port Royal des Champs knew how soon it might fall.§ At Lent, in the year 1655, no fewer than twenty-two Jesuits prepared the minds of their hearers for the great festival of the Church, by denouncing the heretical community from the pulpits of Paris. And it was then, as my readers may remember, that the refusal of absolution

* Lett. de la M. Ang. vol. ii. pp. 344, 346, 363.
† Lett. de la M. Ang. vol. ii. p. 366.
‡ Lett. de la M. Agnès, vol. i. p. 271.
§ Lett. de la M. Ang. vol. ii. p. 420.

to the Duc de Liancourt at St. Sulpice, gave occasion to the controversy which ended in Antoine Arnauld's expulsion from the Sorbonne.

Arnauld was condemned in the last days of January, 1656. Before that time news had reached Port Royal that the dispersion of the Hermits had been resolved upon; in March Angélique learned that Pope Alexander VII. had himself asked this favour of the King.* At first it was thought advisable that the little society should spontaneously abandon Port Royal without waiting for the mandate of expulsion: but the very thought of deserting a spot which had become so dear and sacred to them, occasioned such sorrow, that they determined to wait and abide the last extremity. It soon came. On the 15th March D'Andilly received a letter from the treasurer of the Queen-mother's household, announcing that commissioners had been already named to expel the Solitaries from Port Royal. D'Andilly, in reply, thanked her Majesty for the proof of her ancient friendship for him, afforded by the warning which had been given of the approaching misfortune, and entreated that he and his companions might be permitted peacefully to end their days in their chosen retreat. All he could obtain was a vague assurance that he might possibly be allowed to return to Port Royal before long; and a promise that the officers of the law should not be employed, if he would give his word of honour that the Hermits would spontaneously retire within eight days. Before half the specified time had elapsed the little community was broken up: the fifteen children (among them the poet Racine) who were receiving instruction in the schools, were sent to the houses of various friends; and D'Andilly, who lingered to the last, returned to spend what seemed to him an exile at his once beloved

* Lett. de la M. Ang. vol. iii. pp. 164, 167.

Pomponne.* "My brother D'Andilly," writes Angélique, on the 27th March †, "who had remained to the last, departs to-day. We must adore the judgments of God with humility. He knows what He does, and His wisdom disposes of all in due order and measure. One day we shall see, in another world, and perhaps even yet in this, a part of God's reasons for suffering His servants and even His truth to be thus oppressed. . . . . He sees all. Without faith all things are unendurable; with faith all things are sweet."

On the 30th March M. d'Aubrai, the father and afterwards the victim of the infamous Madame de Brinvilliers, visited Port Royal in his capacity of Lieutenant Civil (or as it might now be called, Prefect of Police) to satisfy himself by inspection that the royal commands had been obeyed. His visit was not altogether unexpected: for De Luzançi and De Bagnols, acting on information which they had received, set out from Paris about the same time, and succeeded in giving the nuns warning of his approach. He first proceeded to Les Granges, which he found entirely deserted except by two peasants, who returned stolid answers, in broad provincial phrase, to his questions; and when he asked for the presses, from which the Provincial Letters were supposed to have issued, took him to look at the wine press. They were more accustomed to handle the spade than the pen, they modestly said, when he asked them to sign their depositions: and were graciously permitted to put what rude mark they would, to that important document. Yet one of these seeming peasants was a priest, who for twenty-seven years exercised the functions of steward of Les Granges, without revealing his name or history to his companions: while the other was one M. Bouilli, formerly canon of the cathedral church of Abbe-

* Mém. d'Andilly, p. 469. † Lett. de la M. Ang. vol. iii. p. 201.

ville, but now a hard-working gardener and vinedresser. Either had preferred the trial of this justifiable, if somewhat perilous stratagem, to leaving the home which had become necessary to his happiness. From Les Granges M. d'Aubrai descended to the monastery, where La Mère Angélique was long and closely questioned by him. She was indeed at this period only a member of the community, undistinguished by any office: yet at the same time, for many obvious reasons, the fittest person to represent the sisterhood at this juncture. He made many attempts to discover evidence of a secret organisation among the Hermits. He would not believe that they had not established an illicit public worship, till reminded by the evidence of his own eyes, that the convent church was the only building in which such worship could possibly be conducted. All he could discover was that the Solitaries had their meals together, and were summoned to them by a bell; a fact which the most perverse ingenuity could hardly torture into heresy or treason. When Angélique reminded him that this privilege, if so it might be called, was enjoyed without molestation by many other persons, he replied, — and the reply disclosed the secret of his inquisitorial visit,—"Truly, Madame, if M. Arnauld and the other gentlemen had less talent, people would neither talk so much about them, nor so greatly find fault with what they do." The whole examination was conducted with civility and moderation: the more so, perhaps, as M. d'Aubrai's commission did not legally extend to the sisterhood of Port Royal. "For whom do you take me, Madame?" he said, when Angélique justified some precaution which she wished to take, by the experience of a previous occasion, — "I am not Laubardemont, the devil of Laudun." So they parted with compliments on both sides: M. d'Aubrai thanked the community for their polite reception of him, and hoped that they would not hence-

forward think that a Lieutenant Civil was as terrible as he was black: while Angélique said that she and the sisterhood had nothing to fear at the hands of justice, and were entirely satisfied with his behaviour. From Port Royal, the inspector proceeded to Le Chénai, the house of M. de Bernières, where several of the pupils in the schools of Port Royal had found a refuge. His civility accompanied him thus far, and he was pleased to approve of the method of education here practised. But the parents of some of the children took alarm at such a system of school inspection: many pupils were withdrawn, and the schools received a blow from which they had not recovered, when in 1661, the order for their final suppression was issued.*

But before M. d'Aubrai's visit to Port Royal des Champs, an event had happened which procured for the community a four years' respite from persecution. This was the famous miracle of the Holy Thorn: a vile imposture, said the Jesuits: "that holy and terrible voice of Jesus Christ," said Pascal†, "which astounds all nature and consoles the Church." Let us narrate the circumstances, and endeavour to estimate the weight of testimony before we adopt either of these judgments, or try to form an independent judgment for ourselves.

The two daughters of Florin Périer, and his wife Gilberte, eldest sister of Blaise Pascal, had, in the year 1653, been placed as boarders at Port Royal de Paris, where their aunt Jacqueline Pascal was already a nun, under the name of Sœur Jacqueline de St. Euphemie. In the year 1656, Marguerite Périer, the younger of the sisters, was from ten to eleven years of age. For three years and a half she had suffered from what the surgeon called an "Ægilops," or lachrymal fistula, in the left eye, about the size of a hazel

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 108, *et seq.* Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 229, *et seq.* Lettres de la Mère Ang. vol. iii. p, 206.

† Prov. Lett. vol. xvi. p. 309.

nut."* The symptoms were very distressing. The corner of the eye and the cheek were much swollen; and when the swelling was pressed, matter issued not only from the eye itself, but also from the nostril. Then for a time the swelling disappeared, but soon became again visible in its former dimensions. The surgeon in attendance, M. d'Alençai, was of opinion that the bone of the nose was carious, and that a part of the purulent matter found its way by this new channel into the throat. A fetid odour issued from the diseased parts, so that the poor child was necessarily separated from her companions. For eighteen months various remedies had been tried in vain, and now, in March, 1656, the operation of cautery had been finally resolved upon, as a last resource, which might or might not prove successful; and the child's father was on his way from Auvergne to be present.

Not far from Port Royal de Paris lived M. de la Potherie, a worthy ecclesiastic, distantly related to La Mère Angélique, who had a passion for collecting relics, and considered it a pious duty to provide them with shrines of fit magnificence. Among others, he had become possessed of a thorn from our Saviour's crown, of undoubted authenticity. He could not selfishly keep so precious a relic for the admiration of his own piety alone, and lent it, therefore, for a time to the sisterhood of Port Royal. They received it with due reverence, and appointed Friday, March 24th, for a festival in its honour. Mass was said; and it was afterwards long remembered that at the introit of the service for the day occurred those words of the 86th Psalm, "Show me a token for good, that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed." Then after a solemn anthem in honour of the Holy Crown, the thorn was exposed upon a low altar, set in the middle of the choir, and the sisters, kneeling, kissed it

* Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 288.

one by one. Next came up the boarders to perform the same homage, their mistress, the Sœur Flavie Passart, standing by. As Marguerite Périer approached in her turn, her eye attracted the notice of Sœur Flavie, who with her own hands applied the relic to the swollen part. No further attention was paid to the circumstance, and when the service was concluded the relic was restored to its owner.

"Towards evening," writes Jacqueline Pascal to her sister, the mother of the child*, "my sister Flavie, who no longer thought of what she had done, heard Marguerite saying to one of her little sisters, 'My eye is cured; it does not hurt me now.' She was not a little surprised at this. She draws near, and finds that the little swelling in the corner which in the morning had been as large as a finger's end, very long, and very hard, no longer existed; and that the eye, which, before it was touched by the relic, was painful to look at, because it watered so much, appeared as healthy as the other, so that no difference between them could be perceived." The purulent matter had altogether ceased to ooze out, and the cure was apparently complete. La Mère Agnès was immediately informed of the circumstance, and on the next day the child's aunt: but it was not thought advisable, in face of the active enmity to Port Royal, to publish the marvel to the world. On the 31st March, exactly a week after the miraculous cure, came M. d'Alençai. The child was shown to him in silence. He began to press the eye; to search for matter in the nostril; in short, to look for all the symptoms with which he had formerly been familiar. His surprise was great when he failed to find them, but greater still when Sœur Flavie recounted her story. Then he declared that such a cure could only be miraculous, and that he was ready to attest the fact, whenever called upon to do so. Still the sisterhood were silent,

* Cousin, Jacqueline Pascal, p. 263.

and it was M. d'Alençai who spread the news through Paris. Then on the 14th April, five physicians and two surgeons, who had had more or less knowledge of the case, signed and published a certificate, stating their belief that such a cure "was beyond the ordinary power of nature, and could not have taken place without a miracle." In October of the same year the officials of the diocese investigated the circumstances, and pronounced an authentication of the miracle, which was followed by a solemn Mass and Te Deum in the convent church. And finally, in 1728, when Port Royal had been destroyed, and the very bones of its saints cast out of their graves, Pope Benedict XIII. quoted, in his printed works, the case of Marguerite Périer as a proof that in the true Church the age of miracles had not gone by.*

Marguerite Périer survived her sudden, and, as she firmly believed, miraculous cure, almost eighty years. Long after the destruction of Port Royal, and when Jansenism was hastening to its final degradation in the miracles of the *convulsionnaires*, she was revered by the devotees of the sect as a living relic of the days of Blaise Pascal and Angélique Arnauld. Not long before her death, which took place in 1733, she writes, in some memoranda of family history which she had compiled, "Such has been the life of all the members of my family. I alone remain. They all died in the immoveable love of the truth. Like Simon Maccabæus, the last of all his brothers, I ought to say, 'all my kindred and my brethren have died in the service of God, and in the love of truth.' I alone remain. If God please, I would that I may never think of failing in my fidelity. It is a boon which I ask of Him with all my heart."† These are

* Jacqueline Pascal (V. Cousin) p. 252, *et seq.* Recueil d'Utrecht, pp. 288, 289. Lettres de la Mère Ang. vol. iii. p. 228, *et seq.* St^e. Beuve, vol. iii. p. 114.

† Jacqueline Pascal (Faugère), p. 438.

not the words of one who had ever been a party to any conscious imposture. So also her family were strongly persuaded of the reality of the miracle. They provided for the celebration of an annual service in the cathedral of Clermont, on the 24th March, and set up an inscription in the same church commemorative of the event. Jacqueline Pascal sang the praises of the Holy Thorn in an ode, which, although an enthusiastic biographer pronounces some of its stanzas not unworthy of Corneille, somewhat tempers our regret that the stern discipline of Port Royal condemned her poetic powers, which had displayed themselves at a very early age, to life-long inaction. And Pascal himself was so deeply convinced that his niece had been cured by a supernatural interposition of Providence, that he caused to be engraved upon his seal an *Eye*, surrounded by a crown of thorns, with the motto, "Scio cui credidi," and henceforth used this new device in place of his old armorial bearings.*

Perhaps the temporary respite afforded to Port Royal was not so important a consequence of the miracle of the Holy Thorn as the direction which it gave to Pascal's faith and meditations; for, as we shall presently see, we owe to it the work which remains to us in the form of his "Thoughts." With this we have here no further to do than is necessary to show by one or two extracts the light in which the miracle presented itself to the friends of Port Royal. "These virgins," says Pascal, in one fragment †, "astonished at what is said of them, that they are in the way of perdition; that their confessors are conducting them to Geneva; that they teach them that Jesus Christ is neither in the Eucharist, nor at the Father's right hand: know that all this is false, and offer themselves to God with this aspiration, 'Behold, if there be any wicked way

* Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 393. Jacqueline Pascal (Cousin), p. 279. Ste. Beuve, vol. iii. p. 115.

† Pensées, ed. Havet, p. 287.

in me!' What happens then? This place which men say is the devil's temple, God makes His house. Men declare that its children must be taken out of it, and God heals them there. Men say that it is the armoury of hell: God makes it the sanctuary of His favours. In one word, they are threatened with all the furies, and all the vengeance of heaven, and God loads them with His mercies. One must be a madman to believe that they are in the way of perdition." Again, he finds a Scripture parallel, not easy to be evaded by those who admitted the reality of the miracle.* "John ix. 'This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath Day. Others said, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?' Which is most clear? This house is not of God, for there they do not believe that the Five Propositions are in Jansen's book. Others say, this house is of God, for He doeth strange miracles there. Which is most clear? What sayest thou? I say that he is a prophet? 'Except this man were of God he could do nothing.'" And once more†: "Miracles are no longer necessary, because we already have them. But when tradition is not listened to, and the Pope alone is set up as authority; when even he has been taken by surprise; when tradition, which is the veritable source of truth, has been excluded, and the Pope, who is its keeper, has been prejudiced, and truth is no longer free to appear;—then, since men no longer speak of the truth, truth herself must speak to men. Thus it happened in the time of Arius." In these extracts, the controversy between the Jesuits and Port Royal, at least so far as it took an argumentative form, is revealed to us. The former did not deny the reality of the miracle, but declared that it proved nothing. It might as well have been worked at Charenton as at Port Royal. In either case it would show only that the Holy Thorn preserved its

* Pensées, p. 292. † Pensées. p. 290.

wonderful efficacy in the midst of heresy and schism. In either case it would exemplify how God sent His miracles where unbelief most needed them. While, on the other hand, Port Royal saw in it the hand of God visibly rebuking calumny and persecution. In the last extremity, He had not forsaken His true servants. When all human help had failed them, a manifest succour had descended from heaven. Henceforward the Augustinian doctrine of grace, already strong in the authority of Scripture and of the Fathers, was inexpugnably fortified by miracle.

We have already seen that Agnès Arnauld was slow to publish the miracle. Angélique, in strict accordance with her conduct on other similar occasions, which have been noted in the conventual annals, was, while not unwilling to believe, yet disinclined to speak of it. In a letter, dated April 23rd, 1656, a month after the sudden cure, she says*: "I wonder that the world talks so much about the miracle that has happened, and still more, that it expects the continuance of such. I have no belief that it will be so; and if it were for me to hope and ask for miracles from God, they should not be worked upon the body, but upon all the wretched souls which languish under miseries a hundred times worse than all bodily ills. . . . Do not desire, my dear sister, that God should deliver his truth by visible miracles, but by those invisible marvels of the conversion of hearts, which are done without rumour and noise." But in a Church, which encourages its members to look for extraordinary interpositions of Providence, and inflames their imaginations with tales of various wonder, especially in the monastic life, where a dreamy piety magnifies petty occurrences into portents, and no contact with the world supplies the good sense necessary to distinguish between the real and the fictitious, it was impossible that

* Lett. de la Mère Ang. vol. iii. p. 220.

such an event as the cure of Marguerite Périer should not produce a plentiful crop of marvels. For eighteen months one miraculous cure was followed by another, some with less, some with more precise authentication. Eager imaginations had much to do with creating these marvels, and eager credulity was ready to record them; while the soberer spirits tried in vain to preserve something of the old humility and reserve. "As for me," writes Angélique *, in reference to an account of certain miracles which had been drawn up, "I will tell you, that I cannot approve of such researches. God knows why He does these miracles, and He will manifest His glory in them in the way which will please Him, without its being necessary that we should interfere with it, or do anything but adore His Divine Providence and bless His bounty with a great humility and gratitude. . . The world makes noise enough about it; and I believe it to be God's will that the world should speak of it, and that we should be silent, and not we only, but also our true friends." And before the epidemic of miracles finally passed away, no fewer than eighty cases of supernatural cures by the efficacy of the Holy Thorn were put on record, with suitable certificates and authentications.†

The effect produced upon the outer world was prodigious. The humble convent in the Fauxbourg St. Jacques became all at once a great centre of pious attraction. Every Friday crowds flocked to adore the Holy Thorn in the church where its powers had been so conspicuously displayed. On one Friday in July, fifty carriages were counted drawn up in line before the convent. Windows looking upon the Fauxbourg were hired to sight-seers, who came to watch the throng of equipages. Masses were constantly said from five o'clock in the morning till noon of

* Lettres de la Mère Ang. vol. iii. p. 348.

† Lettres de la Mère Ang. vol. iii. p. 475.

Friday; and the congregations became at last so large, that places were taken for months beforehand. It was the work of one sister to apply the relic to the linen, rosaries, medals, which were brought to be touched by it. The widowed and exiled Queen of England, Henrietta Maria, made a pilgrimage hither. The Princess Palatine, the celebrated sister of the Queen of Poland, was cured of a grievous sickness by the application of cloths which had been touched by the Holy Thorn. And the Queen-mother, mindful perhaps of her old friendship for the Arnaulds, allowed her resentment to subside; while Mazarin, whose sole care was for peace in Church and State, and who was moved by no theological partisanship, was probably unwilling entirely to sacrifice the Jansenists to their powerful and insatiable enemies. So, little by little, Port Royal des Champs resumed its ancient appearance; D'Andilly and De Luzançi first ventured to return; then the other solitaries, one by one. De Retz, still Archbishop of Paris, though in exile, crowned the good fortune of the community, in the year 1656, by formally appointing Singlin to the office of Superior. "This is the height of my desires upon earth," says Angélique*; "for I see nothing that can more conduce to lead us to heaven." And once more peace and prosperity reigned at Port Royal.†

What judgment then are we to form of the miracle of the Holy Thorn? It is unnecessary here to recapitulate the reasons which would in any case prevent a Protestant critic from regarding the cure of Marguerite Périer as miraculous. If such a one could detect in the affair no trace of imposture, could propose no natural solution of the marvel, he might content himself with a statement that the cure was inexplicable, but could hardly, by any conceivable force of evidence, be compelled into the de-

* Lettres, vol. iii. p. 332.

† Lettres, vol. iii. pp. 254, 266, 272, 332, 340, 403, 408, 413, 475.

claration that it was supernatural. In some cases, he would be led by his theological theory to limit the manifestation of miraculous power to the Church of the Apostolic age. In others, he might admit the *à priori* possibility of a miracle at any time, and in any country, but would point out the unlikelihood of an exhibition of Divine Power through a relic of more than doubtful authenticity. One could conceive of a miracle for the vindication of the slandered, and the defence of the innocent, but not of one which should at the same time lend the most effectual support to the idolatrous veneration of relics. But we are to dismiss these ideas from our minds, when we attempt to fix the moral position of those who, like Pascal, believed in the miracle of the Holy Thorn, and used it as an argument in defence of Port Royal. That God should work a miracle in behalf of His oppressed servants, was what a pious Catholic would naturally expect. Miraculous powers had never ceased to exist in the true Church. They were a token that it, and no other, was the true Church. And so we do not find that even the Jesuits denied that Marguerite Périer had been miraculously cured. They wrangled with the Jansenists only as to the lessons which the miracle was designed to teach. Thus one said that it was meant to turn Port Royal from the error of its ways; the other that it proved the way of Port Royal to be the way of salvation.

To accuse Angélique and Agnès Arnauld, Blaise and Jacqueline Pascal, of complicity in a gross imposture, by which the advancing wave of persecution was successfully turned aside, would be to betray a wilful misapprehension of the noble truthfulness which characterised them all. The unwillingness of La Mère Agnès to publish the event, the strenuous attempts made by La Mère Angélique to check the search for miracle, ought to acquit them both of any intention to deceive, or of any undue readiness to be

deceived. But were they the tools of any other person? Was Marguerite Périer, herself too young to have contrived the deception, young enough to be the unconscious instrument of it? We cannot forbear laying some stress upon the fact that Sœur Flavie Passart, the mistress of the boarders, and the person who applied the relic to the diseased eye, afterwards acquired an evil reputation as a miracle-monger, and a confessed impostor. When there was no Angélique to discourage visions and revelations, Sœur Flavie's visions became ever more frequent and more wonderful; till she acknowledged at last, that almost without knowing it, she had become a liar and a deceiver. Was then the miracle of the Holy Thorn the first trial of her powers of imposture? Or was the cure, inexplicable to herself except on the supposition of a miracle, the event which set her on the search or the manufacture of marvels? If it be at all possible to find a natural explanation of the case, I shall think the latter the most probable supposition. The progress of imposture is often in the direction of conscious deceit. In such cases, the impostor is first the subject of some influence which he truly believes to be supernatural; and is then led on, by external reverence and applause, to feign the condition which is necessary to sustain the popular wonder. The enthusiast developes into the knave.

The disease, under which Marguerite Périer was suffering, namely, lachrymal fistula, arises from a stoppage of the tear-duct, which conveys the superfluous moisture from the cavity of the eye into the nose. The interruption of this outlet results in a swelling or abscess in the upper part of the cheek; which is relieved, when, by the application of a probe, or, as in old surgery, of the cautery, the former communication is re-established, or a new one opened. In the present case the malady had probably proceeded to the extent of ulceration of the posterior por-

tion of the sac in which the abscess was contained, and subsequent caries and absorption of the thin bony partition which separates the cavity of the eye from the upper portion of the nostril. Hence the fetid smell, and the partial passage of purulent matter into the throat. On the eventful 24th of March, in all probability, the bones which separated the diseased sac from the cavity of the throat were decayed as much as they could be to hold together; so that the slightest pressure from outside, or even the influence of any great excitement would altogether break down the barrier. Such pressure and such excitement were caused by the application of the relic; the bone being finally broken through, the contents of the abscess would pass into the throat, and be swallowed almost unconsciously; and as by the removal of the obstruction, the lachrymal sac would no longer be overcharged, the disease would cease to manifest itself. In short, Nature had done for herself, what M. d'Alençai with his hot iron had proposed to do for her. The excitement in the girl's mind consequent upon the idea that she had been the subject of a miracle, would probably tend to the rapid healing of the affected parts, during the week which elapsed before the surgeon saw his patient; an influence of the imagination over the body, which has been remarked in many well-authenticated cases of touching for scrofula under the Stuart Kings of England. While the fact, mentioned by Jacqueline Pascal, that M. d'Alençai had not seen the child for two months before the 24th of March, and did not examine her eye and nose for a week afterwards, will leave ample time for 'Nature's healing force' to exert itself to such good purpose, as to persuade the physicians that a power, higher than their own, had effected the cure.*

* Recueil d'Utrecht, pp. 286, 287.

We are not concerned to investigate and defend the seventy-nine miracles which followed the cure of Marguerite Périer. With them the honour of the chief personages of our story is not involved. To those who can at all place themselves in the Roman Catholic attitude of faith, it will not be wonderful that enthusiasm and credulity should find or make the food on which they feed. Nor was Port Royal now, an obscure community whose spirit was derived from a single source, whose common action was regulated by a single head. It had friends and partisans in every salon of Paris, in every city of France; at the Holy See, and among the Universities of the Netherlands. And the people upon whom a modest example of piety and austerity made little impression; and who were profoundly ignorant of the distinction between Jesuit and Jansenist, had now taken up the cry of miracle, and flocked to the Fauxbourg St. Jacques, as we have seen them flock to Trèves and to La Salette. It is not therefore wonderful that the rosaries and medals which had been touched by the Holy Thorn should continue to work miracles; and that the reports of these marvels should be carefully digested into a narrative by the enthusiastic piety of the friends of Port Royal. What, under such circumstances, could any devout Catholic do, however disinclined to believe wonders and to see visions, except, like Angélique, strive that humility and austerity should not be forgotten in this whirlwind of excitement and success? Still the miracles of the Holy Thorn are a wall of separation between Port Royal and sober Protestant sympathies. The cure of Marguerite Périer is the first step in that abandonment of rational faith, which conducts us, by a long descent, to the miracles at the tomb of the Deacon Paris.

The respite granted to Port Royal lasted from 1657 to 1661; years which will not appear barren of events to

those who have learned to take an interest in the inner fortunes of the house. A curious glimpse of Port Royal des Champs in 1657, is afforded to us in the memoirs of Mademoiselle, as she is called; Mademoiselle de Montpensier, daughter of Gaston, Duke of Orleans; niece of Louis XIII.; the richest heiress of France; who would willingly have married the young king her cousin, and many a crowned head beside: whose romantic project of marriage with Lauzun was so singularly conceived and so suddenly prevented, and who died a spinster at last. She was not far from Port Royal; and wished to visit the monastery which filled so large a space in the world's conversation. She introduces the brief record of her visit with a history of the community, compiled with a truly royal disregard of accuracy; but in which she bears emphatic testimony to the practical Christian virtues of the sisters and friends of Port Royal. "All that one can say of the morals of this society, is that they are admirable and exemplary . . . . Their piety is sincere; and, having renounced all intercourse with the world, they are disinterested, unambitious, and charitable in the last degree. If their doctrine is bad, we must hope that with their righteous lives, they will obtain by their prayers the light necessary to find this out, and to change it." When she arrived at Port Royal, she asked for D'Andilly, whom she had previously known. She found him in his chamber, translating the works of St. Theresa. In the convent itself the behaviour of the nuns appeared to her simple, pious, unaffected. She had thought, she said, to see in this abbey nothing that was to be seen in others; she found it exactly similar to other reformed Bernardine houses. Like the nuns of Gif, in the wars of the Fronde, she could not refrain from expressing her surprise that there were images of saints in the niches, relics in the shrines, holy water beneath the crucifixes. She told M.

d'Andilly, that she was glad to be undeceived; and he, on his part, begged her to relate what she had seen to the Queen-mother.*

These years of respite were also years of loss. The first generation of Port Royal is beginning to pass away. Even in 1653 Angélique had written that of six sisters only she and Agnès then survived: while they could hardly expect to live much longer.† In May, 1657, the community lost a zealous friend in M. de Bagnols ‡, who left his children to the care of the sisterhood which he had so often helped. At the end of 1658, within two months, La Mère Marie des Agnès, Mad. d'Aumont, and Antoine le Maître were taken away. The first was at the time of her death Abbess of Port Royal; one of Angélique's earliest novices, and her worthy successor at Maubuisson. Of Mad. d'Aumont's life of unobtrusive charity, I have already spoken. But the irreparable loss was that of Le Maître. The first of the solitaries, he was in some respects the greatest of them all. Perhaps none had made so hard a sacrifice to the overpowering sense of religious duty, which had brought all to Port Royal: for Christ's sake he had renounced pleasure, and health, and fame at the very moment when they are sweetest. So his retreat is no gradual settling down into a dull, monotonous round of austerity, which fastens upon the life, and is as hard to shake off as any other habit: but a constant warfare with self, a ceaseless striving after an ideal perfection. Now he is so eager in sacred studies, as to have no time for manual labour: now so prompt to humiliate himself by manual labour, as to need a word of recall to his studies. At a time when he was almost worn out by the austerities which brought him to his grave at the age of fifty, a friend said one day

* Mém. de Mademoiselle (Michaud et Poujoulat, vol. iv.) pp. 244—246.
† Lett. vol. ii. p. 266.
‡ Nécrologe, p. 199.

that the best wis he could frame for him was that "before God he might be neither half living, nor half dead."* The phrase fell upon Le Maître's sensitive conscience, like a revelation: he inscribed the words "ni demi vivant, ni demi mort" upon the walls of his chamber: and attempted to obey the warning which they conveyed, by fresh efforts of self-mortification. How noble a recognition of the endless obligations of the Christian life, even though that life be looked at only from the anchorite's cell!

Great as Le Maître's literary fame had been, he has left us hardly any results of his later industry: he was content to translate, to arrange, to compile for Pascal and Arnauld, and to do his part in the schools of Port Royal. No teacher, says Du Fossé†, could be more skilled in pointing out beauties of style in the authors under consideration, or in adorning the passages which he selected for comment with a sweet and elegant elocution. The last work which appeared under his name was a collection of his speeches of twenty years before. The booksellers had published an incomplete and garbled edition, which met nevertheless with great success, and Le Maître's friends with difficulty persuaded him to undertake their revision. The labour was but half accomplished, when other friends took the alarm. Was it fitting, they said, that a man who had been long dead to the world, should refurbish the monuments of his ancient reputation? What better penance than that he should suffer the incorrect edition to pass without protest? Le Maître listened and wavered: Singlin and de Saçi urged him to be silent: but then a contract had been made with a publisher. At last the confessors gave way: the speeches were published: but the health of the penitent never recovered from the shock

* Besoigne, vol. iii. p. 546.
† Du Fossé, p. 156.

of the moral uncertainty, through which he had been forced to struggle.*

He was working upon the lives of the Saints, when, after a brief illness, he died on the 4th November, 1658. Three days before his death, he said that the labour upon which he was engaged was too holy for him: it belonged to Saints alone to speak becomingly of Saints: and that God would raise up some servant, whom He would Himself make worthy of this work. "The great French orator," said Gomberville, somewhat pompously, "now speaks the language of angels." "God give us grace," prayed Singlin, more simply, "to live and die penitently, like him!"†

Meanwhile the signs of coming trouble were easy to be discerned. In 1659, when there was a talk of peace with Spain, the rumour was spread at Court, that Port Royal was disaffected to the King's interests: and D'Andilly thought fit to deny the scandal in a letter which was meant for the eye of Cardinal Mazarin. In June of the same year, the intentions of the Queen-mother were plainly shown. Pomponne, D'Andilly's second and favourite son, endeavoured to procure a place in the household of Monsieur, the King's brother. It was denied him because of his connexion with Port Royal. Once more D'Andilly's facile pen was called into requisition, and he wrote one long letter to the Queen, and another to Mazarin, stoutly asserting the loyalty and orthodoxy of all the Arnaulds. Anne of Austria's elaborate reply is in many respects a remarkable document. Whatever services M. d'Andilly and his son had rendered, could not be weighed against her desire that her son should be brought up "in the purity of religion, and in the true faith, and in Christian submission to the Church." The place and the manner of M. de Pomponne's education, as well as his known deference

* Fontaine, vol. iii. p. 161, *et seq.* Besoigne, vol. iii. p. 545.

† Nécrologe, p. 412. Du Fossé, pp. 161, 163.

to his father's opinions, rendered him an unfit companion for such a prince. Jansenism was no chimæra, as M. d'Andilly would persuade her; it was a lack of humility and submission to the Holy See, and to the decision of the Universal Church. The Formulary was a perfect test of orthodoxy: let M. d'Andilly and his friends subscribe it, and they should be fully restored to the royal favour. And let them not imagine that Pomponne's exclusion from office was the result of any privately hostile influence: it was solely caused and sufficiently justified by his connexion with Port Royal. D'Andilly exerted all his powers of eloquence to explain and to mollify, but with this the interest of the correspondence ends.*

Though the miracle of the Holy Thorn, and the old friendship for the Arnaulds, which yet lingered in the mind of the Queen-mother, still for a time averted the fury of persecution from Port Royal, the Jansenist controversy had not ceased to rage. We must turn back for a moment to describe its progress.

I have already narrated how the assembly of the clergy, backed by the royal authority, insisted that the bishops should unconditionally accept the bull of Innocent X., condemning the Five Propositions. The distinction between "fait" and "droit" had aided this acceptance on the part of some of the prelates: they were ready to condemn the Propositions which the Pope had condemned, though they reserved to themselves the right of denying that they were to be found in the "Augustinus," at least in the condemned sense. But this was not enough for the Molinist party. They were determined that their opponents should drink the full cup of degradation. Accordingly in January 1655, fifteen bishops assembled at the Louvre, and resolved that a declaration of belief, including

* Gerberon, vol. ii. p. 407, *et seq.*

both the "droit" and the "fait," should be drawn up, and offered for signature to all who were suspected of Jansenism. The irregularity of the assembly which issued this declaration, prevented its general reception. Only those bishops who were notorious for their Anti-Jansenist opinions, attempted to enforce the signature of the Formulary, as the declaration was called: and some even of these encountered considerable opposition from the clergy of their dioceses. But in the succeeding year a general assembly of the clergy of France was duly held. The proceedings of the bishops, who from time to time had assembled in Paris were reported to the convocation by De Marca, Archbishop of Toulouse, a prelate, who before entering the Church had held high legal dignities, and was influential among the clergy, on account of his habits of business and knowledge of the world, as well as his fanatical hatred of Jansenism. He took the opportunity of propounding the theory that in the eyes of a good Catholic, the "droit" and the "fait" must be so closely connected, that whoever denied the one, necessarily denied the other too. The King and the Queen-mother, persuaded that Jansenism was heresy, and that heresy is always near akin to treason, addressed letters to the Assembly, enjoining them to put an end to the disputes which had risen up about Innocent X.'s bull. A new Formulary was accordingly drawn up, and a letter written to the Pope, now Alexander VII., praying him to declare whether the Five Propositions had been condemned in the sense in which they were found in Jansen. In due time an answer was received: and a Papal Constitution, dated October 16th, 1656, expressly announced to the faithful, that the controverted propositions were in the "Augustinus," and had been condemned in the sense of the author of the "Augustinus." The Constitution was presented by the nuncio to the King, and to the president of the Assembly. By both it was reverently

received. The Assembly ordered it to be published by every prelate in his diocese: and resolved that the Constitution, as well as the Formulary, once more digested in the following terms, should be signed by all ecclesiastics within the space of one month:—"I submit myself sincerely to the constitution of Pope Innocent X., dated May 31st, 1653, according to its true sense, which has been determined by the constitution of our Holy Father, Pope Alexander VII., dated October 6th, 1656. And I acknowledge that I am bound in conscience to obey these constitutions: and I condemn with heart and mouth the doctrine of the Five Propositions of Cornelius Jansen, contained in his book, entitled 'Augustinus:' which these two Popes and the Bishops have condemned; the same not being the doctrine of Augustine, which Jansen has falsely expounded, contrary to the true sense of that Doctor."*

The Assembly now desired to sustain their resolutions by a royal ordinance, enjoining the signature of the Formulary. Such an ordnance was issued; and it was remarked that with a special reference to the case of Port Royal, the obligation of signature was extended not only to the secular clergy, but even to nuns. For a little while an obstacle was opposed to this arbitrary act, by the unwillingness of the parliament of Paris to register the royal declaration. The King was absent at the seat of war, and it was not thought worth while to incur the risk of a defeat, when by waiting a few months, the royal presence, according to the singular practice of the French parliaments, might impose submission on the refractory magistrates. On the 19th of November, 1657, this final step was taken: the King came to the parliament in royal state; the Chancellor announced his Majesty's pleasure; and the bull was duly read, pub-

* Gerberon, vol. ii. pp. 248, 254, 308, 338.

lished, and registered. But at the very moment when the prize seemed to be within the reach of the Jesuits, it was again snatched away. Mazarin, still supreme in the state, was weary of the dispute. The Archbishop of Toulouse and Père Annat followed up the victory by requesting from the minister lettres de cachet in the King's name, ordering every bishop to take steps for the signature of the Formulary. All at once the Cardinal was ungracious. The Society, he told Annat, gave him more trouble than all the rest of the kingdom; the King had already done too much for them, and should do no more. And with this answer the poor father was obliged to be content.*

Nevertheless, in this very year 1657, the victory of the Society over Port Royal was virtually won, by the appointment of the first of those Jesuit confessors, who, for nearly sixty years, ruled the narrow mind of Louis XIV. This was no other than Père Annat, who was now engaged in a controversy with the author of the Provincial Letters, and had just published a scornful pamphlet against the miracle of the Holy Thorn. The King's mind, naturally not below mediocrity, had been systematically left without training. He was ignorant, his life through, of some of the commonest elements of knowledge. But at the same time he was possessed of the loftiest ideas of his royal supremacy; and although unable, so long as Mazarin lived, to shake off his yoke, was determined never to submit to such another. The Cardinal died in March, 1661, and the Queen-mother's power, which had long been on the wane, in proportion as the minister grew firmer in his seat, and needed her support less, died with him. When the under-secretaries of state came to Louis, to ask with whom they were to transact the business of the kingdom, he replied that he was henceforth his own prime minister. From that day the Gallican

* Gerberon, vol. ii. pp. 350, 378.

Church was delivered into the hands of the Jesuits: Annat, Ferrier, La Chaise, Le Tellier, were by turns its real primates.

The Formulary was allowed to rest till the end of the year 1660. Then the King, roused, it may be, by some fresh calumny against Port Royal, sent for the Bishops who presided in the Assembly of the Clergy then sitting, and communicated to them his resolve that the pernicious sect should be utterly rooted out. He left the means to be employed to their wisdom. What course more obvious than to revise and enforce the Formulary against which the clergy of many dioceses were now maintaining a successful war, but which, supported by the royal authority, would speedily overbear all opposition? On February 1st, 1661, the Assembly therefore resolved that a circular letter should be dispatched to every bishop, commanding him to sign, and to procure the signature of the Formulary, without any distinctions or qualifications; and that a petition should be presented to the King, praying him to forbid the gift of any benefice to an ecclesiastic who had not made the required subscription. Not many days after, Mazarin died. The King was now his own master, as much as any man can be, who has a Jesuit for his confessor. The season of Easter was at hand. Who can tell what dexterous use Père Annat might make of the great feast of the Church in working upon the royal conscience?* On the 13th of April the King issued an order confirming the resolutions of the Assembly, and complying with the terms of their petition. In addition, he caused a letter to be written to every bishop, requiring them to enforce the signature of the Formulary, not only upon all ecclesiastics, but even upon nuns and schoolmasters, while, by another instrument, the necessary powers were also granted.†

* Lett. d'Antoine Arnauld, vol. i. p. 230.

† Gerberon, vol. ii. pp. 475, 483, 484.

The first blow against Port Royal had been struck in the preceding year, 1660, by an order for the final dispersion of the schools, which had been duly carried into effect by M. d'Aubrai. But now one blow quickly followed another, proving by their frequency as well as by their arbitrary character, how complete was Père Annat's ascendancy over the King's mind. M. de Bernières, whose faithful friendship to the obnoxious community was his only crime, was ordered by a lettre de cachet, to withdraw from the capital to Issoudun in Berri, where he survived his banishment but a year. It is instructive to those who have marked the abject servility, which at the close of his reign was exacted by Louis XIV. from all who surrounded him, to notice that in 1661 a public opinion existed in Paris, which was not afraid of arraying itself against the King. "It was wonderful," writes Angélique de St. Jean, to her aunt at Port Royal des Champs *, "to see the number of people who visited M. de Bernières. They say that there were 400 carriages, and at the Palais every one is talking of it, perhaps too much." About the same time, Singlin thought it expedient to conceal himself in order to avoid a similar fate. He and De Saçi, the heads of the two communities, accompanied by Fontaine, and one other companion, established themselves in the upper stories of a house in the Fauxbourg St. Marceau. The lower part was tenanted by Madame Vitart, the lady who had received Le Maître and De Sericourt at Ferté Milon in 1638, and who, now a widow, was bound to Port Royal by many ties of kindred and friendship. To the neighbours she appeared to be the sole occupant of the house, while she secretly attended to the wants of her inmates, who rarely went out, but were busily occupied in writing letters of advice and consolation to the friends whom it would have been hazardous to visit. Most of the soli-

* Lett. de la Mère Ang. vol. iii. p. 522.

taries followed their example, and betook themselves to such places of refuge as they could find, so that when in May, M. d'Aubrai and a troop of officers came to expel them from Port Royal des Champs, they found Les Granges filled with bundles of straw and firewood, under the care of the disguised priest, who had made good his place before; and at the monastery, only M. d'Andilly and his son. The Lieuténant Civil, a man of not ungentle nature, retired, well pleased that his function had been rendered unnecessary.*

The King did not wait for the operation of the Formulary to attack the sisterhoods of Port Royal. The first step was to order the grand vicars of Paris, who administered the diocese in the absence of the archbishop, to deprive the convent of its superior and confessors, and to name others for the royal approval. The grand vicars courageously replied, that Singlin had been appointed by the archbishop himself, and that it was not in their power to remove him. Next, on the 23rd of April, d'Aubrai was sent to command the expulsion, within three days, of all the boarders, and to forbid the reception of such for the future, either for education or in preparation for the noviciate. A similar mandate was sent to Port Royal des Champs. In the two houses there were more than forty boarders; many were orphans, and had never known any other home. All were fondly attached to their kind and wise teachers; while the sisters, on the other hand, took very hardly the separation from the children upon whom their natural womanly affection had freely spent itself.† It was still uncertain what the fate of the postulants would be; and on Quasimodo Sunday, the 25th of April, Agnès Arnauld, now abbess of Port Royal, ventured to give the veil to four of them, and on the next day to three others. But the generous devotion

* Besoigne, vol. i. p. 407; vol. iv. p. 194. Fontaine, vol. iii. p. 276.

† Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. i. p. 488.

of these young girls in thus seeking to cast in their lot with a community manifestly devoted to destruction, was frustrated. On the 4th May, d'Aubrai appeared at Port Royal with a lettre de cachet, in which the King ordered these seven novices to be stripped of their religious habit, and, with all the other novices, to be expelled the convent, while, at the same time, he strictly forbade the community to receive any new sisters. By this arbitrary act even the gentle spirit of La Mère Agnès was roused to remonstrance; and she addressed a long and temperate letter to the King, professing the most entire submission to his royal pleasure, but pointing out that the literal execution of his commands involved the gradual extinction of one of the oldest abbeys of France, and of one, moreover, which in the person of one of the boarders now expelled, had received from God a miraculous attestation of its blamelessness. The appeal was vain. The King read and praised the letter, but did not recall his orders. First, with many tears and sobs, the boarders were taken away by their parents, under the inspection of the police. Then the abbess was informed that the King accepted none of her excuses and explanations as to the profession of the seven novices, and commanded her once more to take away their veils, and to expel them from the convent. With the latter part of the order, Agnès judged it expedient to comply, for M. d'Aubrai had it in his power to enforce compliance; but she declared that she could not in conscience take away the veil from those who had voluntarily assumed it. The terrified girls at first knew not what to do. The abbess left them to make their own choice. M. d'Andilly urged them to stand firm. They chose the braver part; and leaving the convent as professed nuns, long continued to live the monastic life, and to wear the monastic habit, in the houses of their friends. Meanwhile the grand vicars had yielded to the royal wish, and had appointed M. Bail, an ecclesiastic of notoriously anti-

Jansenist opinions, superior of Port Royal. Once more the abbess was compelled to protest. She could not receive M. Bail as superior, for the superior was still living, and had neither resigned, nor been lawfully removed from his office. She was, however, willing to acknowledge M. Bail as a commissary or representative of the grand vicars; and the community was compelled to accept the confessors named by the new superior.*

Angélique, now nearly seventy years of age, had passed the winter of 1660-61 at Port Royal des Champs, in a very feeble state of health. But no change could be detected in her high courage or clear, strong intellect. When the news came that the community was to be deprived of its directors, she felt that her proper place was in the heat of the persecution, and instantly prepared to set out for Paris. It was on the 22nd of April, 1661, that she saw Port Royal des Champs for the last time. Her own heart must have been sufficiently heavy, to quit the home of a lifetime on such an errand; yet, when she arrived in Paris, she met the tears and sad looks of the sisterhood with a cheerful and brave countenance. "What!" she said, "I think I see tears here. Come, children, what is the meaning of this? Have you then no faith! And what are you amazed at? Is it that men bestir themselves? They are but like flies; and you are afraid of them! You hope in God, and yet you are fearful! Believe me, fear Him only, and all will go well;" and then, raising her eyes to heaven, she added, "My God, take pity on thy children! My God, Thy holy will be done!" So, too, when Madame de Chevreuse came to Port Royal to receive her granddaughter, Mademoiselle de Luynes, one of the expelled postulants, and testified her admiration of Angélique's undaunted courage, "Madame," she replied, "when there

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. i. pp. 493, 499. Besoigne, vol. i. p. 408, *et seq.*

is no longer a God, I shall lose heart; but while God is God, I will hope in Him." The struggle of faith was nevertheless severe. Not many days after, she wrote to M. de Sevigné, who had been one of the solitaries of Port Royal: "At last the good God has despoiled us of all: fathers, sisters, children: blessed be His holy name. There is grief here, but with peace and entire submission to the Divine will. We are persuaded that this visitation is a great mercy of God towards us, and one that was absolutely necessary to purify us, and dispose us to make a right use of the many favours which we have received. Believe me, if God deigns to entertain plans of still greater mercy in our behalf, the persecution will go further. Let us humiliate ourselves with our whole hearts, that we may make ourselves worthy of these mercies, so real, yet so unknown to the world." *

But while her resolute spirit was thus the strength and consolation of all around her, the evident decay of her bodily powers was very painful to witness. She compelled herself to eat, but could not, as she said, compel herself to sleep; and so passed almost every night in writing letters, and in other active occupations, suggested by the perils of the community. Little by little, watching and anxiety wore away her already failing strength; and signs of dropsy, the last and fatal disease of old age, began to show themselves. On the 10th of May, the nuns, barefooted, bore all their relics in solemn procession through the church, invoking meanwhile the intercession of the saints in their behalf. A fragment of the True Cross, as being the least burdensome of their treasures, was carried by Angélique. But even this slight exertion overtasked her strength; she tottered with the rest round the church, but when the procession entered the choir, fell fainting to

* Lett. de la Mère Aug. vol. iii. p. 534.

the ground. She was recovered with difficulty, and carried to the bed, from which she never afterwards rose. Still, however, she could not rest, so long as she believed that anything was left undone which she could do; and so, with many pauses, and during many days, dictated a letter to the Queen-mother, in which she set forth the wrongs and the innocence of her house. There are no signs of decaying powers in the strong, solemn sentences with which it opens: —"Madame: The condition to which I find myself reduced by my age, by a chronic weakness, and by a disease which but a few days ago compelled me to ask for the last sacraments of the Church at midnight, for I did not expect to live till daybreak, so brings before my mind the necessity of soon appearing before God, to give an account to Him of all the actions of my life, that if I thought of myself alone, I should no longer think of justifying myself before your Majesty, as to the disadvantageous impressions which have been conveyed to you respecting the conduct of this house. For, Madame, being penetrated as I am with the fear of that just Judge, who will discover the most hidden folds of our hearts, and will set our secret faults in the light of His countenance, the rigours of His judgment, whereof I never lose sight, might easily induce me to disquiet myself the less about the judgments of men. But I should fear, Madame, to offend Him whose justice I dread, if while your Majesty holds in some sort His place here below, I should neglect to justify myself before you; and if I failed to give my sisters, whom I see borne down by affliction and grief, the testimony which I believe I owe to God, and to the sincerity of their consciences; the testimony which I believe I should give at the peril of my life to any house, the most alien in the world from me, if I saw it afflicted like this, and was persuaded of its innocence." *

* Lett. de la Mère Ang. vol. iii. p. 536.

It is needless to recapitulate the arguments and appeals of this eloquent and touching letter. But one passage is so characteristic of the true spirit of Port Royal, of the spirit of St. Cyran and of Singlin, that I cannot forbear to quote it:—"These are the reasons why I dare say to your Majesty, that I am very sensibly afflicted to see that nuns, who seek only to serve God in secret and in silence, should be treated as they are, only because it is supposed that they are instructed and interested in matters of which they are really ignorant. And for myself, Madame, I can say to your Majesty that, while some persons believe that the nuns of this monastery are otherwise virtuous, but that as their faith is unsound, their morals ought to be suspected, I, on the contrary, am fully persuaded that as far as regards the faith, we need in no wise dread the judgments of God, being, by His mercy, very submissive to the Pope, and firmly attached to the Catholic Church, in which we were born, and in which, with God's grace, we are resolved to live and to die. But, on the contrary, Madame, I tremble when I reflect upon the purity of heart which God asks of us; and perhaps it is for our good that He has permitted us to fall into the affliction, and desertion of all the world to which we see ourselves reduced; because He has not found in us that perfect purity which our profession demands. But I hope, Madame, that after we have been nourished for a season on the bread of tears, and have adored, in deep humility, the fatherly hand which chastens us, He will bring the calm after the storm, and that His mercy will appease His wrath." *

From this time to the 6th of August, she hung between life and death, more than once taking a last farewell of the community, and receiving the sacraments of the Church, yet again and again recalled to a consciousness of

* Lett. de la Mère Ang. vol. iii. p. 540.

the troubles which beset the house. Both Singlin and De Saçi ventured in disguise to visit her, and afford her the last consolations of religion. Her good-bye to the former was very striking. "I shall never see you again, father, but I promise you that I will no longer be afraid of God." Who but herself, and the friend with whom she spoke, would have suspected that after a life of striving, perfect love had not yet cast out fear? At last the time came when it was no longer considered prudent that either confessor should risk a visit to Port Royal. The sisters hesitated long before they broke to her the unwelcome intelligence that she must not expect to see De Saçi again. "They must not come any more," she said; "good-bye, my poor nephew; I shall never see him again. It is God's will; it troubles me not. My nephew, without God, could do nothing for me, and God, without my nephew, will be all in all to *me*." And so, when her sister condoled with her on Singlin's enforced absence, she said how much she had esteemed and loved the confessor, but added, "I have never put a man in God's place. He can have only what God gives him; and God gives him something for us only when it is His will that we should receive it through him."

The pious care of her niece and successor has placed on record many of her last words*; all of them strong, clear, and sound, like her heart and mind. To the very last she was, as she had been her life long, the real head of the house, firmest of faith, highest of heart, boldest of speech. None could refuse to trust in God, when they listened to this dying woman, worn by the labours and austerities of seventy years, racked by a painful and

* Vide Mém. pour servir. part i. relation xiii. "De la maladie et de la mort de la Mère Marie Angélique, &c. Par la Mère Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld, sa nièce," vol. ii. p. 123, *et seq.*, from which the particulars in the text are taken.

mortal disease, feeling with intenser anguish the trouble that had come upon them all, still declaring that God was just, and that therefore it must be well with His faithful servants. She was afraid, she said, when she reflected on the dignity of persecution: what were they that God should think them worthy to suffer for His truth? It was well that He should humiliate them, for men had spoken too much and too favourably of them. She herself had many sins and shortcomings to lament, for which she asked pardon of her sisters. But she did not doubt that the novices and boarders would be brought back, and the house re-established as of old. "I am more doubtful," she continued, "whether the spirit of retreat, of simplicity, of poverty, of disinterestedness, will be preserved, and once more prevail; for these things always decline; yet, if they remain in the house, we may laugh at all else. As for all that is done, and all that is designed to be done against us, I heed it no more than this fly"— brushing one away from her as she spoke. In a similar spirit, a few days before her death, she received M. des Contes, Grand Vicar of Paris, who, with M. Bail, the new Superior, was making a visit of inspection. Des Contes seated himself at her bedside, and inquired the nature of her complaint. On hearing that it was dropsy, he cried, "Jesus! my mother, you speak of that as if it were an indifferent matter. Are you not then astonished at it?" "No, monsieur," she answered, "I am beyond comparison more astonished at what I see taking place in this house. For, in brief, I came here to die, and I ought to prepare to die; but I did not come here to see all that I now see; and I had no cause to expect the treatment which I meet with. Monsieur, monsieur, *now* is the day of man. God's day will come, which will discover many things, and will avenge all!"

We must not linger any longer beside this death-bed.

The end came, after many painful struggles, on the 6th of August. The people, especially the poor, who lived to call her their mother, thronged to kiss the hands of the corpse, and to touch it with medals, or rings, or rosaries. If she was not a saint, said they, who could be? She was buried, as she wished to be, without pomp in the choir of the convent church at Paris; while her heart was deposited at Port Royal des Champs. In a month more she would have been seventy years of age.

Whoever undertakes to write the history of Port Royal must be loth to part with Angélique Arnauld. Her death is a sign that the great-hearted men and women, who, not seeking for fame, nevertheless made their monastery famous for the severity of its rule and the modesty of its austerity, are beginning to pass away. Le Maître is already gone; Pascal is about to follow in 1662; Singlin in 1664. Hitherto our story has been one of a purely religious revival; and the aspirations which have moulded the characters in it, have been towards a simple unconsciousness of faith, and a primitive strictness of morals. But soon we shall become more and more involved in the discussion of doubtful points of policy; in a struggle, where the arts of the dialectician were called in to enlighten or obscure the plain proceeding of conscience; where men vainly sought for compromises between truthfulness and submission. And thus it is essential for the right understanding both of all that has gone before, and of all that will follow, that we should try to describe the spirit of the reformed Port Royal, in the character of La Mère Angélique.

She was of a warm, eager nature; quick witted, and quick tempered; ready of speech and prompt in action; by no means of the quiet, passive character, which is supposed to accommodate itself easily to the monastic life; but made of the same material as those famous

women, who have from time to time set their mark upon French society. Domestic circumstances drove her into the cloister, and with a little more temptation or a little less maternal care, she might easily have abandoned the cloister for La Rochelle. But she was reserved for better things than a flight to Protestantism for mere worldliness' sake. When the change of heart and will, by which God made her His own, had been consummated, the very qualities of mind, which impelled her to quit the convent, commanded and helped her to reform and rule it. How she undertook and accomplished that task, we have seen already. In a few years she had completely conquered the slothful or rebellious spirits of the old sisterhood of Port Royal; and then remained the life-long task of conquering herself. There are many indications scattered through her letters and recorded sayings, which show the resolute spirit in which she set herself to the work. She tried earnestly and perseveringly the discipline of obedience. She had been called to command, she said, too early; and in reparation of the fault, her later years should be spent in learning to obey. Four times she vowed absolute obedience to a director: to Francis de Sales, to M. de Langres, to St. Cyran, and to Singlin. But her ardent spirit could find no perfect peace even in unconditional submission. To the last her life was one continued struggle. While to others she appeared a bright example of sanctity, her failures and shortcomings were very real and painful to herself. She would often, for example, kneel to some sister, whom she had thought it needful to reprove, and implore pardon for any uncharitable bitterness of speech into which she might have been betrayed.* And only a few days before her death, she begged the sisterhood to forgive the too frequent heat of a temper,

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 559.

which all but herself looked upon as characterised by a saintly patience and moderation.

Through life a quick decisiveness of thought and speech remained with her, testifying to the inward force of will, and rendering the ascendancy of her character upon those who were near to her, both swift and sure. She was accustomed to go at once to the point, with a rapidity sometimes almost startling. One of the community has recorded how a nun, who claimed the hospitality of Port Royal during the war of the Fronde, appeared before Angélique, neatly gloved, and with a scapulary adjusted to resemble as nearly as possible the fashionable shape of petticoat. In an instant gloves and bustle were taken from the astonished sister, and thrown contemptuously aside; while a kind but stern exhortation on simplicity of attire followed the energetic protest against finery.* So, too, the memoirs of Port Royal are full of her weighty sayings, which illustrate in turn every constituent of her masculine character. She was annoyed by discovering the existence in the community of a small pride in the antiquity of the monastery, or the splendour of the order to which it belonged. "As for me," she said, "I am of the order of all the Saints, and all the Saints are of my order." * One day she thanked M. Hamon, for some service which he had rendered to her. He answered that all that he could do for her was nothing. "Say not so," was the strong, truthful answer; "nothing is little that is done for God." Again, when the same good physician remonstrated with her on her excessive self-denial in eating: "I am far removed from sobriety," she said, "but know this, that we shall give an account to God of our idle mouthfuls, as well as of our idle words." It was with words such as these that she impressed upon her

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 575.

nuns the faith and hope which animated herself. Her terse warnings, her pithy exhortations, fixed themselves like barbed arrows in the memory. One day she was conversing with the novices on the all importance of charity in the monastic life. "For what does it matter whether we be sitting or standing, halt or whole, so we be truly united, one with the other?" and then, turning suddenly to a lame sister, who sat by, "Come, come, daughter, be not over anxious. The lame walk as quickly in Paradise as the rest." One at least of the little audience was sure to remember the day's lesson.*

This vivacity of speech sometimes, it must be confessed, exercised a repellent influence. Le Maître, we are told, was afraid of her, and unwilling to put confidence in her. It was to him that Madame d'Aumont once said: "I assure you that I agree better with La Mère Agnès; our Mother is too strong for me." But Madame d'Andilly, when Madame de St. Ange made a similar confession to her, replied with a compliment to her sister which was both beautiful and true: "La Mère Angélique is like the good angels, who terrify at first and afterwards console.†

Angélique's religious strength was based upon one of the simplest of theological convictions; an immovable faith in God's righteousness. The Lord God omnipotent reigneth; how should it not be well with His elect? We have seen how wonderfully this faith sustained her through the prolonged agonies of a death-bed, around which almost every possible circumstance of adversity seemed to darken. It had been the same throughout her life. She cast herself and the necessities of the community unreservedly upon God; and did not doubt that He would amply provide for both. If He provided in the way in which His

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 532.

† Divers Actes, Lettres et Relations des Religieuses de P. R., rel. iv. p. 4. See note p. 348.

provision was looked for, it was right; and still right—because His will—if He chose to try them with poverty and anxiety. When Port Royal de Paris was founded, the community, as I have narrated in its place, became deeply involved in debt. M. de Langres, who was at least partly responsible for the expenditure, had money, which, with a financial astuteness inherited from his Florentine father, he refused to lend on such security as the convent could offer. Angélique was sorely tried by this unwonted difficulty; perhaps was tempted to make up the deficiency by the reception of rich postulants: for St. Cyran thought fit to tell her that God, and not well endowed damsels, would pay her debts; and that He would satisfy men, so soon as she, by her penitence, had satisfied Him. And before long, she says, some one came, who offered to lend money to the sisterhood; but asked to see the estate, which they would mortgage to him for the amount. "I told him, that for security I could offer him only the lands of our abbey, which were small, and the providence of God, which was great,"—and wonderful to say, the lender was satisfied, nor ever had reason to repent of his satisfaction. And the same trust was strikingly displayed during a dangerous illness of La Mère Agnès. The sisters, in hourly expectation of her death, were in an agony of apprehension and sorrow; while Angélique, who had most to suffer in the impending loss, calmly reproved them for their want of faith. "Is it not true, sisters, that if the life and death of La Mère Agnès depended upon M. Singlin, you would not be afraid, but be in perfect peace? You would say, 'Oh, we cannot doubt of M. Singlin's love for us; and he knows how necessary La Mère Agnès is to us. And on this account we ought not to be afraid.' What, do you not know that the goodness of God is infinitely greater than that of all his creatures; and that He does nothing, except for the welfare of those

who are His? But we have no faith, we are entirely human. Instead of abandoning ourselves to God; of running to Him, of praying to Him; we amuse ourselves with vain fears and useless disquietudes." *

This lofty faith in God was accompanied by the most persevering and self-denying love of men. Her commanding spirit powerfully swayed the minds of those with whom she came in contact: but first her energetic kindness and self-abandonment had won their hearts. The stories of her good heart, of her quick will, that would see no obstacle in the way of a kind action, are innumerable. Every sister, whom she had in any way helped, seems to have reverently and affectionately cast a stone upon her monumental heap. Some she received without a dowry, when no other religious house would take them in: with the sins and weaknesses of others she patiently and secretly bore, till she had fashioned them after the likeness of the sisterhood. Many were the cases in which a poor girl, weighed down by the consciousness and the results of her sin, received from Angélique Arnauld the succour and consolation which only a pure can afford to an erring sister. More than one such victim of passion found a peaceful asylum at Port Royal, knowing that with the Abbess their secret was safe, and learning from her charity the unspeakable mercy of the Gospel. Thus, too, if any attendance upon the sick was more than commonly burdensome or infectious, La Mère Angélique was sure to bear her share in it. She dressed sores which no one else would willingly approach, delighting to take her opportunity when the sisterhood were in the church, that her good offices might not be watched or made a subject of conversation. Once, when a lay sister had hurt her hand, and lay for some days screaming with the pain, Angélique removed her to

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 64.

her own cell, that no one else might encounter the discomfort of a sleepless night. "Cry out, daughter, cry out," she said; "don't try to restrain yourself. I have brought you here to cry out." Both in Paris and at Port Royal she was idolized by the poor. She fed them during the war; nursed them in their sicknesses; would spend her last sou in almsgiving, and all with a frank kindness which doubled the value of the gift. And the lavish hospitality which she exercised during the Fronde was a token of the same active beneficence.

Closely connected with this unbounded charitableness was another quality which her friendly biographers bring out in strong relief, as unwonted in one of her condition —her disinterestedness. The convents of France at this time were places of refuge only for well-endowed piety. A poor postulant, however rich in spiritual gifts, might knock for admittance at their gates in vain. But from the first Angélique's rule was to look only at the moral fitness of the candidate, and to stretch to the utmost the small revenues of the convent to receive all who were truly desirous to enter. The way in which she took her thirty novices of Maubuisson to Port Royal is only a type of many such actions. Thus too, she often firmly put aside the liberality of wealthy and powerful friends. She could not endure that Madame de Gueménné should recompense the monastery for its hospitality. There were poor enough who needed an alms; let her bestow it upon them. A rich widow, Madame de Chazé, has left us an account of the perseverance with which Angélique thwarted her plans for the endowment of Port Royal, and pointed out what she considered fitter objects of beneficence. On another occasion, when a valuable property in the town of Bazas was bequeathed to the community, she prevailed with them to renounce it in favour of a poor Ursuline convent at Bazas, whose deserts and whose necessities were alike great. She

and her nuns had taken the vow of poverty, and she was determined that it should not be forgotten or evaded. "As long as I live," she said, "this house shall never be rich; for after the wants of the community, who are the poor whom it is our first duty to assist, are supplied, all that comes in at one door shall go out at the other." *

But her quick will, her vivacious intellect, her enthusiasm of faith and charity, were associated in a very remarkable way with good sense and sobriety of judgment. It is singular that she was able to maintain so strong an ascendancy over a convent of Roman Catholic nuns, and yet show so little of a mystical and visionary faith. Her creed taught her not to refuse belief to the visions and revelations of others, while her own healthy religious instincts warned her not to look for such phenomena in herself. She confesses that she was of all persons in the world the farthest removed from these extraordinary methods of Providence.† When the easy faith of the community insisted on calling by the name of miracle certain singular accidents which had happened to herself, she set her face indignantly against the assumption. When it was difficult by any other means to rouse her from the stupor of approaching death, a word of belief in the reality of her miracles would instantly wake her to almost angry protest. She was always unwilling to speak of herself. Again and again she entreats the Queen of Poland to burn her letters, and was sincerely distressed to find that copies of them were secretly sent back to France. She was induced to commence her autobiography only by the commands of Singlin, and found an excuse at last for leaving the ungrateful task unfinished. When she died she would leave no messages for her friends; she would not have them talk, when she was gone, of what she had said to one and the other. And when the example of La

* Mém. pour servir. vol. iii. p. 192; vol. ii. pp. 496, 528.
† Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 337.

Mère Suireau was alleged against her, "That," she replied, "was very well for her, who was of a great simplicity and humility. I am not like her." *

I have tried in vain to convey to my readers the impression which the character of Angélique Arnauld has made upon me: I have succeeded only in laying open before them the materials from which they may form their own judgment of her. Not many of her sex are worthy of a place by the side of this queen among women. The junction of so warm a heart, so eager a faith, with a power of intellect, and a practical sagacity such as her's, is rare indeed. And however strongly we may feel the inevitable weakness and incompleteness of the monastic life, however we may trace its enervating influence even upon such a mind as that of Angélique Arnauld, it is hard to wish that she had found any other sphere of development for her powers. What nobler work for any woman than to recall an ancient religious foundation to a primitive simplicity of rule, an apostolic ardour of piety? to be the nurse of religious emotions in hundreds of kindred souls? to keep a large community in unity of purpose and peace of heart? to struggle through the years allotted to man's life with the weaknesses of an impetuous nature, yet to find perfect peace at last, amid all that could disturb and disquiet, in the conviction of God's everlasting righteousness? and worn with years of disease, and sinking fast into the grave, to supply from her own great heart courage and consolation for her afflicted house? Such a death was fit ending for such a life; in the world's eye, a failure and a disappointment; to the vision of Christian faith, an euthanasia indeed.

* Mém. pour servir. vol. ii. p. 124.

VII.

THE eight years from the death of Angélique Arnauld in 1661, to the peace of the Church in 1669, were the agony of Port Royal — a period sufficiently full of bitter sorrows and long-drawn despair to those who lived through it, yet at the same time so crowded with perplexed events, so covered with the web of delicate negotiations and subtle attempts at compromise, as to tax all the historian's art for its narration. And yet it is not difficult to decypher the main motives of those who persecuted on the one side, and suffered on the other. The King firmly believed that Jansenism was an insult to the sovereignty of the Pope, which it became him, as the champion of all lawful authority, to resent; while an undefined notion had also taken possession of his mind, that somehow Jansenists were Frondeurs and rebels too. Besides he had but just grasped the reins of government in his own hands, and so was prepared angrily to put down the first opposition offered to his omnipotence. The Jesuits too, who, in gaining possession of the royal conscience, seated themselves upon the chair of ecclesiastical authority in France, had, as we have seen, their own causes of quarrel with St. Cyran and Arnauld, which the whole course of controversy, from the attack of Père Garasse to the publication of the Provincial Letters, had only tended to inflame. How far, in addition, we ought to suppose them to have been influenced by a genuine regard for the system of doctrine which was characteristic of their order, or for the maintenance of the papal infallibility, is not easy to say. Perhaps those motives were stronger

with that large class of the French clergy who, at least at first, looked upon Jansenism as rather an error than a crime, and deplored, while they half admired the constancy of the Jansenists; yet, in all likelihood, not many even of these thought the means which were employed to bring the sisterhood of Port Royal within the pale of Catholic unity either arbitrary or oppressive. The Formulary which the community were required to sign — to avoid signing which Arnauld and Singlin went into hiding — was drawn up and imposed by the regular authorities in Church and State. And those who preferred to follow the impulses of conscience rather than the dictates of loyalty had no right to complain if they suffered some of the penalties of treason.

I have already said that the theological position of the Jansenists was a very narrow one, separated by an almost inperceptible boundary from the desert of Calvinism. So too it may be questioned whether the arguments by which they defended their right to a place within the Catholic Church were not more subtle than true.* The distinction between "droit" and "fait"— between the Pope's infallibility in matters of doctrine and in matters of fact — appears, to a Protestant conscience, to have the air of that school of casuistry against which Pascal so energetically protested. And yet, if the distinction itself was not the spontaneous product of the moral sense, it arose from a sincere desire to reconcile its demands with those of beliefs and feelings which long custom had elevated to almost the same level of authority. In the mouth of the sincere Jansenist, its meaning was this: "A son of the Holy Catholic Church I was born and will die. Every article of faith imposed

* Melchior Leydecker, the Protestant author of a work "De Jansenii vita et morte" (quoted by St^e. Beuve, vol. iii. p. 30), says aptly enough:— "Et cur non nobiscum egrediuntur diu viri optimi, a Papis damnati, a Jesuitis afflicti,, pressique intolerabili jugo quod conscientiæ libertatem non permittit?" (lib. iii. cap. 10.)

upon me by the Church I will receive; only, whatever the Pope may say, fact is fact, and I cannot assert, that five propositions are in a book which I have read, and which I know does not contain them." So such an one strove to relieve himself from the imputation of treason to the Pope by showing that the Pope's lawful authority did not extend so far as some would stretch it. Could he establish the difference between "droit" and "fait" he proved himself a dutiful son of the Church. As in innumerable political convulsions, one party called rebellion what the other dignified by the name of resistance to encroaching prerogative.

Thus the history of the eight years on which we are about to enter may be summed up in few words. The King and the Archbishop of Paris attempt to enforce upon the sisterhood the signature of the Formulary, which not only condemns the doctrine of the Five Propositions, but asserts that they are to be found in the "Augustinus." They are not nice in the selection of means to this end: insult, threats, exile, imprisonment, spiritual terrors. On the other side, the nuns, conscious of their attachment to the Church, submissive to its doctrinal decisions, for the most part ignorant of the history and merits of the dispute, refuse to sign a statement of fact in regard to a book which they have not read, and are unable to read; a statement, moreover, which those whom they are accustomed to trust and to revere assure them is not true. And so month after month compromises are offered by either side, and rejected by the other: the cloud of trouble grows darker and darker: treason and weakness do their work in thinning the little band of witnesses; even death seems to labour for their enemies, in choosing from them their best and bravest. Listen to the disputants alternately, and you shall hear each profess to interpret the unity and authority of the Church. Yet here it is once more true, that men often fight their stoutest battles without knowing on which side they fight; for the contest

is only another phase of the endless struggle between church authority and the individual conscience: between a great array of visible force, and souls which find their whole strength in the consciousnes of truth-speaking.

I have already described the first attacks which were directed against Port Royal; the removal of the superior and confessors; the expulsion of the boarders and postulants, and the prohibition to receive fresh novices; the removal from the convent of some who were actually professed sisters. The new superior, M. Bail, was an ecclesiastic well known for the violence of his anti-Jansenist opinions; and, as such, not likely to deal too mildly with those who defended the stronghold of Jansenism. He commenced operations by a visit, which, in June, 1661, he made to the two communities. Accompanied by M. des Contes, Dean of Paris, who was well inclined to Port Royal, and on that account had joined his less moderate colleague in this commission, he interrogated every nun separately, keeping a diligent watch for any trace of heresy or insubordination. We have already seen with what indignation the visitors were received by the dying Angélique. Jacqueline Pascal, now sub-prioress of Port Royal des Champs, has left an account of her own interview with the commissioner, in which he does not appear to have fared much better. She declared, in answer to his questions, that she had heard no doctrines promulgated in that house with which she had not been familiar throughout her life. Had she been taught as a child, that Jesus Christ died for all men? She did not recollect that any such statement was in her catechism, and had received in the convent no specific instruction on the subject, but quoted two lines from a French version of the Hours, which seemed to declare the doctrine in question. Then how was it that so many persons perished everlastingly? *That* was a mystery of God's ways which she was unable to fathom — she was content with praying for,

sinners, and strove to banish such speculations from her mind. Did she teach this doctrine to the novices under her charge? As she did not trouble herself about these things, she said, she took care not to perplex her pupils' minds with them, trying, on the contrary, to keep them as much as possible in the simplicity of the faith. Nor again, did she teach them that when they sinned it was no fault of their own. In the last place, had she any complaints to make? No; by God's grace she was perfectly content, whereat the commissioner was more than ever astonished: in some religious houses which he visited, the nuns kept him for two hours at a time talking of their grievances, and here there was nothing of the kind! So he had no choice but to give Sœur Euphemie his blessing, and to send for the next sister on the list, to make in all probability as fruitless an inquisition into her faith and practice.* And the result of the whole was, that the enemies of Port Royal were once more compelled to bless where they had come to curse. In the speech which M. Bail made to the sisterhood at the close of his visit, he confessed that he had found no trace of the heretical opinions which had been supposed to exist among them, a miracle which, considering the dangerous influences to which they had been exposed, he deemed not less remarkable than that of the Holy Thorn.† The formal report which the visitors made was still more honourably explicit. They had found, they said, "the two

* Cousin, Jacq. Pascal, p. 309.

† Divers Actes, &c., relation i. p. 9. I quote here from a valuable collection of pamphlets, which, though not continuously paged, have this common title, "Divers Actes, Lettres, et Relations des Religieuses de P. R. du St. Sacrément, touchant la Persecution et les Violences qui leur ont été faites au sujet de la Signature du Formulaire." No place or date. As the copy to which I have had access contains two copies of one document, it is quite possible that my references—the most accurate which I could adopt—may not be universally applicable, and that the contents of the volume may in each case depend to some extent upon the binder.

houses not only in a regular and orderly condition: the vows, constitutions, and rules well observed; a great charity and unity among the sisterhood; an attendance upon the sacraments worthy of approbation; but also an orthodox faith, and the obedience lawfully due to our Holy Father the Pope, and to all the decrees of the Church. They had discovered nothing contrary to good morals, or to orthodox faith, and the doctrine of the Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman; and still more, had noticed a great simplicity of mind and absence of curiosity as to controverted questions."* Such was the verdict which even the assailants of Port Royal were compelled to pronounce upon it at the very moment when they were about to commence the work of destruction. Never, surely, was it made more plain that the judicial axe was about to descend upon innocent heads; never was vengeance more signally compelled to take off the serene mask of justice, and to display its own distorted features.

Meanwhile, the grand vicars of the diocese had issued, on the 8th of June, a "mandement," or order, by which they explained the sense of the Formulary, and imposed the signature of it upon all religious persons of either sex. The document was drawn up in conciliatory terms; some said, in concert with the friends of Port Royal; others even believed by Pascal himself.† It distinguished with sufficient clearness between the "droit" and the "fait;" and, while demanding submission to the doctrinal decisions of the Pope, passed by in silence the only controverted question, the existence of the Five Propositions in the "Augustinus." The doctors of Port Royal accordingly conceived that the Formulary, thus explained, might be signed with a good conscience; and, giving this opinion, referred the matter to the sisterhood. It is perhaps hard to say that

* Gerberon, vol. ii. p. 497.

† Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 311.

the instinct of truthfulness was stronger within the convent walls, than in such men as Arnauld and Nicole: perhaps a more correct statement would be, that the nuns had not learned the scholastic art of reasoning to a foregone conclusion. They were not satisfied with the arguments of their directors. The mandement was all very well; but they were required to sign, not only the mandement, but the Formulary, in which the all-important distinction between "fait" and "droit" was expressly confounded. Suppose, that with the explanation of the grand vicars, they signed the Formulary, would not the enemy soon find the means of suppressing the explanation, and then assert that they had put their hands to a document which they abhorred? Peace might be preserved by such a course, but what would become of the interests of truth? And the conclusion to which they came at last was to sign the obnoxious documents, with a brief statement of their own, in which they declared that they embraced absolutely and without reserve the faith of the Catholic Church; that they condemned all the errors which it condemned; and that their signature was a testimony to this, their disposition.

The two communities had hitherto acted in concert, the house in Paris taking care to keep the sisters in the country exactly informed of all that passed. But in this important instance they failed, we know not how, in their duty. The order of the grand vicars was brought to Port Royal des Champs, unaccompanied by any explanations; the community were told that everybody was signing it, and that their best friends advised them to sign it too. Their perplexity was great; nor were any more perplexed than the subprioress, Jacqueline Pascal. Her conscience revolted from the signature, and yet she supposed herself to be under a certain obligation of obedience to sign. In this strait she poured out all her soul in a noble letter ad-

dressed to Angélique de St. Jean, which, however, she sent when it was finished to Antoine Arnauld. After a sentence of preface, she says:—"We understood very well that, in asking our signature, they demand of us no more than respect; silence, that is, as to the fact, and belief in all that is matter of faith. But most of us wished with all our hearts that the mandement had been worse than it is, because then at least we might have rejected it with entire freedom, instead of which, many will be, as it were, constrained to receive it, while a false prudence and a real cowardice will cause many more to welcome it, as a favourable means of ensuring safety to both their persons and their consciences. As for me, I am persuaded that they will attain neither of these ends in this way; only the truth truly sets free; and doubtless it liberates those alone who themselves set it free, by confessing it with such fidelity, as to deserve to be themselves confessed and recognised the true children of God.

"I cannot hide the grief which wounds me to the very bottom of my heart, when I see the only persons to whom it seemed that God had intrusted his truth, so faithless, if I may venture to say so, as not to dare to encounter suffering, even if death were the penalty of a noble confession. I know the respect which is due to the highest powers in the Church; I would die to preserve it inviolate, with as good courage as I am ready to die, with God's help, for the confession of my faith, in this present strait; but I see nothing more easy than to unite the two. What prevents every ecclesiastic who knows the truth from answering, when the Formulary is laid before him for signature, 'I know the respect which I owe to the bishops, but my conscience does not permit me to testify by my signature that a thing is in a book, where I have not seen it?' And then let him wait patiently for whatever may happen. What do we fear? Banishment for the seculars,

dispersion for the nuns, the seizure of our goods, imprisonment, and, if you will, death? But are not these things our glory, and ought they not to be our joy? Let us either renounce the Gospel, or follow the maxims of the Gospel, and esteem ourselves happy to suffer somewhat for justice' sake!

"But perhaps they will cut us off from the Church? Who does not know that no one can be cut off in his own despite, and that as the spirit of Jesus Christ is the sole bond which unites His members to Himself, and to one another, we may be deprived of the marks, but never of the effect of that union, so long as we preserve charity, without which, no one is a living member of His body? . . . .

"Alas! my dear sister, how happy ought we to be, if we have been found worthy to suffer some notable confusion for Jesus Christ! But men have taken too good care to prevent this, by so disguising the truth that the cleverest can hardly know it for what it is. I admire the subtlety of mind displayed in this; I confess that nothing can be better drawn up than the mandement. I should greatly praise a heretic, in the same way as the householder praised his steward, if he had as cleverly escaped condemnation; but for the faithful, for men who know and maintain the truth and the Catholic Church, to use disguises and crooked ways,—I think that this has never been seen in past ages; and I pray God to take us all today rather than introduce such a policy into His Church. Truly, my dear sister, I find it hard to believe that this wisdom comes from the Father of Lights; much more I deem it a revelation of flesh and blood. . . . .

"I know well that men say that it is not for women to defend the truth; although they might say that, since by a sad accident and confusion of the times in which we live, bishops have no more than women's courage, women

ought to have the courage of bishops. But if it is not our part to defend the truth, it is ours at least to die for it. . . . .

"Let us pray God, my dear sister, to humiliate and to strengthen us; for humility without strength, and strength without humility, are equally hurtful. Now more than ever is the time to recollect that the timid are ranked with the perjured and the wicked. If they are content with what we do, well and good; for myself, if the matter remains with me, I will never do anything more. For the rest, let come what will,—imprisonment, death, dispersion, poverty,—all will seem as nothing to me, compared with the anguish in which I should pass the remainder of my days, if I had been so unhappy as to ally myself with death, at so noble an opportunity of performing to God the vows of fidelity which my lips have uttered."

It is not necessary to quote the whole of this striking letter, the spirit of which is sufficiently shown by the foregoing extracts. Antoine Arnauld received it in that calm and forbearing spirit which marks the true greatness of his soul, and returned an answer, which is no longer extant. Meanwhile the crisis had come to an end. The nuns of Port Royal des Champs signed the Formulary, in the same way as the sisterhood of Paris. La Mère Angélique claimed the protection of a greater king than Louis XIV., and died without having put her hand to the humiliating confession. In two short months, Jacqueline Pascal followed her. Her letter was prophetic: it was easier to die for the truth than to defend it. The agitation of mind which preceded and perhaps followed her signature, proved speedily fatal; it may be, though her biographers are cautious not to confess it, that, after all, she repented having yielded to authority even an apparent and temporary victory over conscience. She was only thirty-six years of age when she died on the 8th of October, 1661,

the first victim, as she herself expressed it, of the Formulary. "God give us grace," said her brother, when he heard of it, "to die as good a death." *

It does not appear that any of those who directed the affairs of the community entertained more than the faintest hope that this concession would prove satisfactory. If it were so, they were soon undeceived. La Mère Agnès ventured to apply to the proper authorities for permission to receive novices once more, and thus avert the natural death which seemed to threaten the sisterhood. She reminded M. des Contes, to whom she wrote on this subject, that the King had interdicted the reception of novices only so long as they were governed by a superior of evil repute, and that M. Bail, their present superior, was an ecclesiastic of unblemished orthodoxy. But the only answer which she received was one of procrastination: His Majesty would come to a decision by-and-bye.† Meanwhile both Pope and King had taken up arms against the too indulgent mandate of the grand vicars; and one by a brief, the other by a decree, commanded its suppression, and the issue of a second, which should make no allusion to the distinction between fact and doctrine. M. des Contes, however anxious to save Port Royal, had no alternative but to comply; and the second order for the signature of the Formulary, drawn up in accordance with the wishes of the Court, or rather of the Jesuits, was published on the last day of October. The subtle logic of Arnauld; the tearful concessions of his sister and her nuns; the death of Jacqueline Pascal, had been all in vain; the ledge of peril upon which Port Royal stood, was narrower than before.‡

The community were proportionately disturbed; not,

* Divers Actes, rel. i. p. 12; *et seq.* Cousin, Jacq. Pascal, p. 317, *et seq.*
† Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. pp. 13, 14, 18.
‡ Vie de Nicole, p. 88. Gerberon, vol. ii. pp. 510, 514.

as their own account touchingly says, by any fear of the temporal evils with which they were threatened, but by the various propositions of compromise which were constantly made to them, and supported by some of their best friends. Who cannot tell, from his own experience of some similar contest between plain conscientiousness and specious expediency, what were the arguments by which these propositions were recommended? Poor M. des Contes, in his good-natured anxiety to avoid a painful duty, does not seem to have got much deeper than the motive of ecclesiastical subordination. He implored Agnès to sign without explanations or conditions; the time would come when all should be explained to her satisfaction. But what, she said, if meanwhile she should fall into the hands of the Great Judge, who would take account of her as she was, and pay no heed to the good dean's future explanations? Well then, all she had do to was to throw the responsibility upon him, and he in turn should lay it upon the Pope, and so make an end of it.* Such assaults as these were easily beaten back; but subtler methods of attack were not left without a trial. And if any one needs to be convinced how trenchant and victorious a weapon simple truthfulness is, and how utterly unable to prevail against it the sharpest sophistry of self-seeking, he may study the speech of Agnès Arnauld to her nuns, on Sunday, November 20th. She had read to them the order of the grand vicars; and in a few weighty words, first pointed out the various paths of action which lay before them, and then the objections to her own plan of conditional signature. No one hoped that such a signature would avert the storm of persecution: but it would at least show their willingness to obey their ecclesiastical superiors in all possible things, while it did not betray the truth which they had to defend. They

* Divers Actes, rel. i. p. 19.

were but ignorant women, men would say, and did they take upon themselves to decide weighty controversies of the Church? On the contrary it was this very ignorance, which they put on record; they resisted the attempts of their enemies to force them to a dogmatic assertion, which from their lips, was not true. Or they did but testify an ecclesiastical submission by their signature; why then did the Formulary run—I condemn *with heart and soul?* But if to refuse to sign would entail certain ruin on an honourable and ancient foundation, wherein many souls are saved and many children brought up in the fear of God:—Better even ruin than safety and prosperity purchased by sin. Many good men, who had approved Jansen's book, had yet signed the Formulary, and was it not presumptuous in them, to set themselves against the example of good men? Every one has his own soul to save; and a sin is still a sin, even if all men commit it. And so in silent prayer the assembly dispersed to think of this honest speech; while day by day the Veni Creator rose in solemn harmony from the choir of Port Royal—an invocation which, I humbly think, God did not disdain to answer by His presence.*

A week more passed by; and it was necessary to come to a final decision. Accordingly, after much debate, long statement, and settlement of individual scruples, it was agreed that the Formulary should be signed with the following preamble:—"We, Abbess, Prioresses, and Nuns of the two monasteries of Port Royal de Paris and des Champs, assembled in chapter in each of the houses; to satisfy the decree of MM. the Vicars General of Monseigneur the Cardinal de Retz, dated the last day of October of the present year, 1661; considering that ignorant as we are of all matters above our profession and our sex, all we can do is to testify the purity of our faith; very willingly

* Divers Actes, rel. i. pp. 26, 27.

declare by our signature that submitting ourselves with very profound respect to our Holy Father the Pope, and having nothing so precious as the faith, we sincerely and heartily embrace all that His Holiness, and Pope Innocent X. have decided, and reject all the errors which they have judged to be contrary to it." With many tears and hesitations, the Formulary, thus prefaced, was signed by all the inmates of both houses; and on the 3rd of December, sent to the dean for approval. "*I* am satisfied with it," he replied, "but the Court will not be." And so saying, he sent the paper back, imploring of the community an unconditional signature, while there was yet opportunity. Again the abbess called the nuns together; again she explained to them the probable consequences of their act; and again they refused compliance with the decree of the vicars general. On the 9th of December, M. des Contes came to the monastery to try what his presence would do. There he found D'Andilly, whom he attempted to engage as his advocate. But the blood of the Arnaulds had not cooled in the old man's veins; he had no power, he said, to change the resolution of the sisterhood, and if he had, he would never use it to persuade them against their conscience. A subsequent visit of one of the new confessors, who adopted a tone of menace with which the ears of the nuns were not yet familiar, was equally ineffectual. So the dean for the present drew off his forces, and good-naturedly locked up the unsatisfactory document in his desk, resolved not to produce it, till compelled by a higher authority.*

During this brief interval of suspense the time arrived for La Mère Agnès to lay down her dignity; and the community claimed of the grand vicars, not without some trepidation, the right to proceed to the free election of an abbess. On the 12th of December, therefore, a chapter was

* Divers Actes, MS. i. pp. 28—32.

held, and after a solemn mass, La Mère Madeleine de St. Agnès de Ligni was chosen to the vacant office. It is her highest praise that she so administered the affairs of the house, at the time of its severest trial, as to leave its friends no reason to regret that an Arnauld was not its head.*

Meanwhile the advisers of Port Royal without the convent walls were divided by a grave diversity of opinion; which though in itself only one more fold of this intricate web of controversy, deserves to be recorded for the light which it throws upon individual character. The great doctor of Port Royal at this period was undoubtedly Antoine Arnauld. Unlike Singlin, whose talent of tracking the secret windings of the human heart was best exercised in a time of peace and silence, he was a man of action,—I had almost said,—of intrigue; skilled in using all the weapons of controversy; of a clear, subtle, many-sided mind, making him apt for negotiation, clever in lawful compromise. The modified forms of signature which the sisterhood adopted, were devised by him; and to him Jacqueline Pascal addressed her burning words of remonstrance. Nicole, throughout a long life, Arnauld's second self; and Singlin, who was naturally inclined to ways of mediation, and besides, felt ill at ease in these theological labyrinths, both advocated the same policy. Almost alone Pascal stood up in favour of a bolder course. When he first mingled in the Jansenist fray, he had to some extent defended other men's positions; from his own ample treasury, found golden words for their thoughts; and so in his later Provincial Letters, had earnestly maintained the separability of "droit" and "fait." Now, after four years of thought, and reading, and prayer, he had come to the conclusion that this celebrated distinction, even if founded on fact, might after all be somewhat of a cowardly

* Divers Actes, rel. i. p. 33. Lett. d'Agnès, vol. ii. p. 24.

subterfuge. The bull of Alexander VII. condemned the Five Propositions in the sense of Jansen, whatever that might be. What was this but to condemn the doctrine of efficacious grace, the doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Paul? In no other light could it be looked upon by a faithful disciple of Jansen and St. Cyran. And if so, then to sign the Formulary, without expressly excepting from its condemnation the true doctrine of Jansen, was no less than to betray the truth. To use his own words:—"Whence I conclude that those who sign the Formulary, simply and without restriction, sign the condemnation of Jansen, of St. Augustine, and of efficacious grace. I conclude, in the second place, that whoever excepts the doctrine of Jansen in formal terms, saves from condemnation both Jansen and efficacious grace. I conclude, in the third place, that those who sign, making mention only of the faith generally, and not formally including the doctrine of Jansen, take a middle course which is abominable before God, despicable before men, and quite useless to those whose personal destruction is desired."* In a word, Pascal was ready, in this matter at least, to consign the Papal infallibility in doctrine to the same limbo whither his Jansenist friends desired to banish the infallibility as to facts.

More than one memoir, in which the disputants sought to restore unity of feeling and policy, were written on either side. And at last, when all that memoirs could do had been done, a conference was held at Pascal's house. On one side were Arnauld, Nicole, St. Marthe; on the other, Pascal, with his intimate personal friends, the Duc de Roannez, Domat, the well-known jurisconsult, and M. Périer the younger. The discussion turned upon the words which occurred in the proposed preamble to the Formulary, "Having nothing so precious as the faith, we

* Ste. Beuve, vol. iii. p. 19.

embrace sincerely and heartily all the decisions of the popes"—a sentence which in Pascal's view condemned, at least tacitly, the orthodox, the Pauline, the Augustinian sense of Jansen's doctrine. After a temperate debate, the superior authority of Arnauld and Nicole drew to their side the votes of the little assembly. Pascal, left alone, worn out with austerity, and tired with the unusual exertion of the debate, lost both speech and consciousness, and was with difficulty restored. "When I saw all those give way," he said, "to whom I believe God has entrusted the knowledge of the truth, and who ought to be its defenders, I confess that I was so overcome with grief, that I could no longer bear up." Perhaps he thought of his sister, quietly dying for the same good cause at Port Royal des Champs, and of his own aspiration after as good a death. Yet ten months longer, and then the end will come for him too: ten months of ceaseless self-maceration, and we cannot doubt, of secret, gnawing sorrow, yet of an unbroken friendship also with those whose want of faith had grieved him so sorely. He left his papers on the signature in a friend's hand: "Publish them," he said, "if Port Royal yields; suppress them if Port Royal stands fast." And after awhile, circumstance declared itself on Pascal's side; for no compromise, however artfully drawn up or honestly offered, could save those who were doomed, or have any effect but that of endangering the truth.*

The Christmas days of 1661-2 wore away gloomily and anxiously enough. The well-meaning friends of the community still perplexed their minds with advice and offers of mediation: first came the Bishop of Meaux, brother of the new abbess; then the Bishop of Chalons, a more distant relative; then M. des Contes again, with a plan that the nuns should sign the Formulary unconditionally, and deposit in his hands a secret declaration of opinion, to be

* Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 315, *et seq.*

produced at a fitting season. It is needless to say that so untruthful a proposition was received with silent scorn, and pardoned only because it was believed to have been prompted by a genuine kindness of heart. At last the sisters, in order to relieve their abbess and La Mère Agnès from much friendly yet painful importunity, signed a paper, in which they declared that their conduct was dictated not by canonical obedience to their head, but by individual scruples of conscience; and that the abbess was unable, even if she were willing, to induce them to act differently. The good dean was now at his wit's end; the Court was asking to see the signatures, and he was unwilling to produce the paper. As was expected, it answered no purpose of conciliation; the King, his confessor, the minister who had been the tool of the Jesuits in the matter, all were angry, and all uttered vague threats of terrible things to come. "I see," Madame de Gueméné was bold enough to say, "the King does whatever he will; he makes princes of the blood; he makes bishops and archbishops; and now he wants to make martyrs too." Still there were no signs of fear at Port Royal. At the beginning of the year, the hopes of the sisterhood had been greatly raised by what they imagined to be a fresh interposition of God in their behalf. Sister Catherine Suzanne Champagne, daughter of the celebrated painter of that name, had been suddenly cured of what appears to have been a chronic and most painful rheumatism, after a nine days' round of prayer specially made in her behalf by La Mère Agnès.* And indeed the fact that the persecution

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. p. 31. M. Faugère informs us, in a note (p. 32) that Philippe de Champagne executed a large picture of Agnès Arnauld and his daughter in the attitude of prayer, which he gave as a token of gratitude to the community. The picture subsequently became the property of the Cardinal de Noailles, and is now in the Louvre, Grand Gallery, No. 83.

had endured so long, and that the community was still substantially uninjured, was itself wonderful enough. "To-day," writes Agnès Arnauld, on the 23rd of April, "to-day, my very dear mother, is too remarkable a day for us, not to be noted at the commencement of this letter; it is the anniversary of the first visit of the Lieutenant Civil, which has been followed by several others, and accompanied by results, the rigour of which you know. Who would have believed that, at the end of a year, we should have been where we are; either that justice should not have been accorded to us, or that violence should not have gone to greater lengths? Nevertheless, we are in the same condition as we were; not re-established, and yet not destroyed; God not having permitted that the illwill against us should have its complete accomplishment. We are drawing near to the time when, to all appearance, we shall see the end of all things. But if God be for us, who shall be against us? And if only we are the sheep of that Good Shepherd, He may suffer the wolves to howl, but He will never permit them to devour our souls." *

In spite of this lofty confidence, the nets were not the less surely closing about the prey. At the end of February, De Retz, the banished Archbishop of Paris, finally resigned his office, and De Marca, Archbishop of Toulouse, the author of the Formulary, was nominated in his place. Yet at this moment of extremest peril, a brief period of respite and comparative peace offered itself. On the 29th of June, a few days after he had received his bulls from Rome, and so was prepared to enter upon the business of his diocese, the new prelate died. The King appointed his old preceptor, Hardouin de Beaumont de Perefixe, Bishop of Rhodez, to the vacant see; and once more the necessary documents were asked from the Pope. But the grand vicars, who, in the absence of De Retz, had go-

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. p. 48. Divers Actes, vol. i. pp. 35, 45.

verned the diocese, were now removed from their post, and others of a very different temper held for a time the authority of the archbishop expectant. These then issued on the 2nd of July, a third mandement, in which they not only commanded the unconditional signature of the Formulary, but declared that all ecclesiastics, who had not signed it, were *ipso facto* suspended from their functions. Upon this, the communities of Port Royal resolved to take advantage of the condition of the diocese, which had, and yet had not, a bishop. Assembled in full chapter, they solemnly declared that they could in conscience sign the Formulary in no other way than that in which they had already obeyed the grand vicars of Cardinal de Retz; and made a formal appeal from the authors of the present mandement, to their superior, the archbishop of the diocese. And as M. de Perefixe did not receive his bulls till April 10th, 1664, Port Royal enjoyed for eighteen months a restless and anxious immunity from molestation.*

It was no secret that the new archbishop was wholly in the interest of the Court, and of the Molinist party, who now pre-occupied the royal ear. The sisters of Port Royal therefore were offering up the prayers for their bishop, which canonical etiquette asked of them, with a tearful and half-despairing sincerity, when a severe and altogether unexpected blow fell upon them. This was the death of Singlin. To them no loss could be so great. Others of the doctors of Port Royal occupied a more conspicuous place in public estimation, and guided with firmer hand the helm of controversy; but to the nuns Singlin was father, brother, friend; he had received most of them into the monastic life, and had been the resource to which all had turned for help in the difficulties and sorrows of their vocation. At the commencement of the per-

* Gerberon, vol. iii. p. 14. Besoigne, vol. i. pp. 447, 448, 479.

secution in 1661, a lettre de cachet had been issued against him, which he evaded by retiring with one or two companions to a lonely house in the Faubourg St. Marceau. Here he succeeded in maintaining his ground; some of his penitents he visited in disguise; with others he kept up the necessary communication by letter, while his advice was eagerly sought at all points of the difficult negotiations in which Port Royal was entangled. And we may easily believe that the painful circumstances in which he was placed, added to the ceaseless austerities which he practised, did much to hasten his death. He was little of a speculative theologian, and so had no desire to play the part of an heresiarch; was even not disinclined to sign the Formulary as a matter of canonical obedience, that having cleared this terrible obstacle out of the way, he might continue his own work of practical edification. The Lent fasts of 1664 were too much for him; he came home one day faint in body, and weary at heart, and lay down upon the bed, from which he was to rise no more. Less than a week's illness sufficed to wear him out; he died on the morning of the 17th of April, "as a lamp goes out, in which there is no more oil." His body was quickly and secretly transported to Port Royal de Paris, where it was interred in the same grave as the bowels of his master, St. Cyran; his heart was sent to Port Royal des Champs. "He came back to us," says one of the sisters, "as it were, in triumph, if we may give that name to so mournful a ceremony as that of his burial." "His most precious relics," writes La Mère Agnès*, after speaking of the books and images which had belonged to him, "are those of his mind, and the practice of the instructions which he gave us for twenty-eight years, during twenty of which he has been the sole director, the light, the support, the consolation of our monastery, as we hope he will always be in

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. p. 153.

the presence of God." Two days afterwards, M. de Perefixe entered upon his see; but the nuns consoled themselves with the thought that death had been quicker and stronger than the archbishop, and that Singlin died, as he had lived, lawful superior of Port Royal.*

Whatever can be said in favour of the practice of auricular confession, finds its ground and justification in the character of such men as Antoine Singlin. He is the type which Port Royal offers to the Roman Catholic world, of the perfect director. It is true that he was moulded by the hands of St. Cyran. It is true that Antoine Arnauld and Isaac de Saçi exercised the same functions with extraordinary success. But in each of these celebrated men, the talent of direction was only one of many gifts, and perhaps not the most precious; while in Singlin it was characteristic, and almost alone made him what he was. He never had more learning than was sufficient to procure his ordination. Till St. Cyran found him out, he worked willingly in the obscurest corner of the vineyard of God. His most partial biographers, his most admiring friends, nowhere ascribe to him the possession of brilliant talents. When the days of trouble came, and Port Royal needed the guidance of a governing mind, he sank and died. The only work which remains to testify of him, is a collection of "Instructions Chretiennes," notes of sermons, which, however full of living force as they came from his lips, lie dull and dead upon the printed page. Yet few men have exercised so potent a witchery of personal influence; and that not only on the illiterate and the simple-minded, but on men and women of the profoundest learning, and the most various force of character. La Mère Angélique, who had known Francis de Sales and St. Cyran, submitted herself with most unquestioning confidence to his guidance. His

* Divers Actes, rel. ii. pp. 3, 4. Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. pp. 144, 154. Du Fossé, pp. 220, 222. Fontaine, vol. iv. p. 9, *et seq.*

preaching sent Pascal to the solitudes of Port Royal des Champs. Arnauld and De Saçi listened with childlike reverence to sermons which they had themselves suggested to him. He guided Madame de Longueville, the beautiful, the erring, the unhappy sister of the great Condé, from the sins and sorrows of her youth, to the comparative peace in which she passed her later years. No penitent could hold back his heart from Singlin; and none ever opened the secrets of a heart to him in vain.

I suppose that the explanation of this must be sought in the fact, that the clearest moral insight, and the keenest spiritual discernment, may co-exist with intellectual faculties which are neither brilliant nor profound. And as it is reserved for the pure in heart to see God, so a man of simple conscientiousness, of unaffected aspiration after divine things, may be more skilled than the subtle casuist or the rigid logician in tracking the windings and self-deceptions of the human heart, and in wakening to growth the germs of a purer and higher life. It is some evidence of this that Singlin was long unconscious of the force within him, and was driven to the exercise of his vocation only by pressure of circumstance. He first became a confessor when St. Cyran's imprisonment left the flock without a shepherd. While that imprisonment lasted, Singlin did no more than carry into execution the directions which he received from Vincennes: when it was ended, he was with difficulty persuaded not to retire into some distant monastery, and there apply himself uninterruptedly to the work of his own salvation. "Excuse me, Monsieur," answered St. Cyran, when Singlin confided to him one day all his scruples and difficulties, "if I tell you that all you have just said to me is beside the purpose. You are in a certain position; God has placed you there; and you can not leave it till He withdraws you from it. It is yours, nevertheless, to do what Paul recommends to his disciples,

to fight a good fight in supporting the weaknesses and shortcomings of other souls. Give back to them the patience which God has shown to us; support them with the same tenderness."* Once more, after St. Cyran's death, only the warmest solicitations of his friends could hinder him from executing his project of retirement. He compared himself with those about him, and could not believe that God had any special work for one who had neither quick wit nor ready tongue. And all the while his humility and sincerity were his strength.

If to these we join a certain soul-subduing earnestness, and a vivid perception of divine realities, we shall understand why he was not only an attractive, but a successful preacher. I have already narrated how he looked to others for much of the framework of his sermons, yet how he clothed the thought thus given to him in such persuasive phrase, that each of his hearers applied the exhortation to himself. He had little of the orator, nothing of the rhetorician in his nature; he neither dazzled his hearers with metaphorical fireworks, nor overwhelmed them with a heavy cannonade of learning: the classics were strangers in his pulpit, and the Fathers less frequently quoted than the Scriptures. His was simply the power of a living soul over souls waiting to be quickened by a diviner life. He believed, and therefore spoke persuasively. Perhaps no fact shows more conclusively that Port Royal had deeply penetrated into some of the secret places of religion, than that silence was enjoined upon Le Maître, while Singlin was compelled to preach. The wise and prudent in the art of speech gave place; and praise was perfected out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.

The first act of the community, on hearing that the Archbishop of Paris was once more legally qualified to govern them, was to send to the new prelate a message

* Fontaine, vol. ii. p. 102.

of congratulation. For this purpose they chose Lancelot, whose unobtrusive character and labours had drawn upon him little unfavourable notice from those in authority. The task of conciliation was a hopeless one; for it was well understood that the destruction of Port Royal had been a condition of Perefixe's appointment. Yet, when not exasperated by unexpected opposition, the Archbishop was neither sour nor violent; and now received the messenger kindly. He should be delighted to serve M. Lancelot, and the good sisters; would shed his blood to help them out of their difficulty; but they must do something for themselves too. The King believed that a new heresy was springing up in his dominions, and was resolved to stifle it in its birth. Nay — there was no knowing to what length his Majesty might not go; he, the Archbishop, could already claim credit for having held him back. So with this they plunged into a long discussion as to fact and faith; which naturally led to no more result than fair words on both sides. The Archbishop would be only too glad if any expedient could be found to extricate him from so painful a position towards persons of such exemplary virtue. And Lancelot went away, no more hopeful than he came.* A visit with which the Archbishop surprised the Abbess of Port Royal on the 20th of May, was equally fruitless. It is chiefly noteworthy as showing that M. de Perefixe, however subsequently guilty of harshness and even brutality, had no personal enmity against the community; and would willingly, if possible, have met them halfway on the path of compromise. For three hours and a half he reasoned temperately with the abbess; and La Mère Agnès notes that the language of courtesy and apparent sincerity was pleasant to their unaccustomed ears.†

* Lancelot, vol. ii. p. 502.

† Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. p. 157.

On Trinity Sunday, June 8th, M. de Paris issued another mandement for the signature of the Formulary in his diocese. In this document he added a new subtlety to those which already perplexed the controversy. It was true, he laid down, that the signature testified a belief in the "fait," as well as in the "droit;" but he took a distinction between the kinds of belief appropriate to each. He required a "divine faith" in the Papal definition of doctrine, while he held "a human or ecclesiastical belief" in the Papal declaration of fact, to be sufficient. The distinction is easy enough to express in words; difficult indeed for a conscience, unused to the ways of casuistry, to realise in fact. The moralists of Port Royal received it with an universal shout of scornful ridicule; few even of the Jesuits ventured to lift up a voice in its defence; and after it had proved itself as inefficacious in practice as it was untenable in theory, the Archbishop quietly let it drop. So far as I can grasp its real meaning, it seems to have been a device for persuading simple people, that they could declare a "human belief" in a statement of facts, in regard to which they were wholly ignorant, but which an ecclesiastical superior asserted to be true.*

At half-past six of the morning of the next day, the Archbishop, accompanied by one of his grand vicars, appeared at the convent gates. After mass had been duly said, he addressed the assembled community in a speech of studied moderation. He insisted upon the virtues of

* Divers Actes, vol. ii. p. 11. Besoigne, vol. i. p. 483.

Some time afterwards M. de Paris himself explained his distinction to the nuns in the following original manner (Besoigne, vol. i. p. 554):—

"On appelle foi divine ce qui a été révélé de Dieu, et ce que Dieu nous a appris immédiatement par lui-même: voilà ce que c'est que la foi divine. Qu'est ce que la foi ecclésiastique? C'est ce que j'ai appris par la révélation de l'Eglise. Tout de même si un Ange m'avoit révélé quelque chose, je le croirois d'un foi angélique. Et ainsi il y a autant de fois, qu'il y a de personnes par qui nous savons, et nous croyons quelque chose."

subordination and obedience, without which no community and no church could hold together. He spoke in respectful and even admiring terms of "that great man" the Bishop of Ypres; and especially called the attention of his hearers to the brief will, which Jansen had dictated in his last moments, and in which he had submitted his work to the judgment of the Holy See. The Pope had passed judgment on the doctrines of the "Augustinus;" he had condemned them in the sense, and as the doctrines of Jansen; to that condemnation Jansen, had he been living, would assuredly have bowed;—why should his followers be less candid or less obedient? The arguments of the speech perhaps gained some weight from the dignified presence of the speaker; and it was the Archbishop's design to push this advantage as far as it would go. He announced his intention of conversing with the nuns in private, one by one; of hearing and, if possible, of removing their objections. The result was hardly worth the trouble; the scrutiny, as it was called, lasted several days; no weight of authority and no quibble about human and divine faith could convince the sisters that it was right to sign a statement, which they could not know to be true; and the Archbishop, finding that he had placed himself in an undignified position, made it worse by losing his temper. On the Thursday he concluded his visit with a less conciliatory speech than that with which he had opened it. He had found them, he said, prejudiced, hot-headed, self-willed, incapable of advice and instruction. He had remarked in them from the beginning a spirit of cabal, of conspiracy, of stubbornness. They preferred the unauthorised opinions of a handful of theologians, to those of their Archbishop, and their Pope. Whether heretics or not, they should remember that obstinacy was a characteristic of heretics; and the King had resolved to visit the refractory with the punishments of heresy. And then,

after a long tirade, he again abated the violence of his tone. It would be with the utmost sorrow that he should have recourse to extreme measures; and they would suffer nothing which he had not himself first suffered. Three weeks' grace might yet—according to his ordinance—be allowed them. Let them occupy that interval with prayer and meditation upon his arguments. Every day they should say, by way of penance, the Veni Creator; and he would send a trustworthy person to whom they might confide their doubts and difficulties. The formal part of this communication was embodied in an "acte de visite," duly signed and witnessed.*

It would answer little purpose to narrate in detail all the attempts at compromise which filled the three weary weeks after the Archbishop's visit; how M. Chamillard, the new confessor, tried the experiment of a personal interview with each of the nuns, and failed as signally as his master; how he defined "foi humaine" to be an act of heroic obedience which consists in believing the assertions of a superior, while at the same time we subdue our own understanding; how his colleague, Père Esprit, asserted that to believe the fact of Jansen, was only to believe that the Pope had made a certain assertion respecting it, a matter which, the nuns told him, nobody doubted; how the harassed sisterhood, despairing of human help, drew up long petitions for assistance to the Saviour, to the Virgin, to St. Mary Magdalen, to their own patron, St. Lawrence, to their founder, St. Bernard, and to many saints more, which abbess and nuns severally signed, hoping against hope. At last on the 10th of July a final attempt was made to satisfy the Archbishop, and the community subscribed the following declaration: "We, the undersigned, promise submission, and sincere belief as to the faith; while with regard to

* Divers Actes, rel. ii. pp. 11—35.

the fact, as we can of ourselves have no knowledge of it, we form no judgment, but abide in the respect and silence suitable to our sex and condition." This signature, accompanied by a statement of motives which had been adopted in full chapter on the 5th of July, was sent to the Archbishop by the hands of the painter, Philippe de Champagne. But M. de Perefixe gave the messenger no hope that the concession would be satisfactory. "It is strange," he said, "that these women continue to be so obstinate." M. de Champagne answered "My lord, it is not obstinacy. They shrink from testifying to a fact of which they have no knowledge." "I have no ill will against the poor women themselves," replied the Archbishop, "but only against those who have brought them to this pass. I fear that the King will be irritated, and I cannot answer for the result." Another proof — if one were needed — of the secret Court influence which was urging on the destruction of Port Royal. The Jesuits formed a truer estimate of the constancy of the community than the Archbishop. He had undertaken, as the price of his promotion, that the sisterhood should sign the Formulary, and was not unwilling to compass that end by gentle means. He flattered himself that no well-meaning community could withstand his argument from Jansen's will, and his distinction between human and divine faith, especially when backed up by his archiepiscopal presence and persuasions. Père Annat knew better; he knew that the Archbishop would be driven to use force at last; and Perefixe kept the terms of his bargain, and paid for his see in brutal violence.*

The crisis was now plainly not far off. Public rumour informed the sisters that the first act of aggression would be to deprive them of the sacraments of the Church, to carry away into a poorly-disguised imprisonment the heads of the community, and to impose upon the rest, thus de-

* Divers Actes, rel. ii. p. 74.

prived of their natural leaders, superiors who would at once be the instruments and the spies of their persecutors. Before, therefore, they were thus divided, and publicly declared contumacious, they resolved to take the last opportunity of solemn protest. On the 11th of August the sisters assembled in full chapter. Each in her appointed place, they stood round a table on which lay a copy of the Scriptures. In conformity with a superstition, to which a rapturous piety in every communion has always been inclined, La Mère Agnès opened the book, in order to draw from the passage on which her eye might first chance to fall, an augury of their future fate. It was John xvi. 20: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." A hard saying, were it not for that which follows: "And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." And reading on, the good mother found the very consolation which she needed: "And now, therefore, ye have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Then the confession of faith was read aloud by one of the sisters, and received by the rest on their knees; while, as soon as it was concluded, each kissed the Gospels in token of acquiescence. Next the Protest was read, a calm and solemn document, which was afterwards signed by the whole community. It first set forth the annoyances and persecutions which the house had endured since the visit of the Lieutenant Civil in 1661: the expulsion of the boarders; the prohibition to receive novices; the deprivation of the superior and confessors. It next recited the articles of the Catholic faith, in which the community professed an entire belief, and expressed their submission to the traditions and constitutions of the Church, the decisions of the Council of Trent, the authority of the Pope, and especially the declarations of orthodox faith made by Innocent X. and Alexander VII. It then went on to testify their

loyalty to the King, and obedience to their ecclesiastical superiors, calling as unimpeachable witnesses to the purity of their conduct, the favourable certificates which had been accorded to them by hostile visitors. They appeal in support of this statement to the Archbishop of Paris himself, the present instrument of persecution, who, within two months, had declared that he found no fault with them, except their refusal to sign the Formulary. They record the modified signatures which they had ineffectually offered, and for the reasons which had moved them to refuse any other, refer to the Capitular act now in the Archbishop's hands. And they close with a protest against any future dispersion of the community, or other infringement of its corporate rights and privileges, as illegal, null, and void.

This protest shared the inevitable fate of all protests; it did not delay for a single day the execution of the measures against which it reclaimed. On Thursday, August 21st, a little after noon, the Archbishop once more appeared at Port Royal, and addressed the assembled sisters. There was little pretence of argument in his speech; much display of authority. He magnified the patience and gentleness with which he had borne with their obstinacy, now for more than two months; he charged them, by virtue of their canonical obedience, to sign his ordinance and the Formulary; if they still persisted in their refusal, he must consult God and his own conscience as to his subsequent treatment of them. As a last chance, he would speak to every sister in private, and receive from each a plain yes or no. So one by one they went through the ordeal of an individual rebellion against their Archbishop, whose anger rose higher and higher as each successive No fell upon his ear. Each, as she left his presence, hastened to the cell of La Mère Agnès, where in prayer and reading of the Scriptures,

* Divers Actes, rel. ii. p. 84.

they passed the time, till they were again called together to receive the expected sentence. Once more, in this anxious interval, the New Testament was consulted as to the future. The lot was not encouraging; the book opened at the words: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness."

About four o'clock the community was summoned to the Archbishop's presence. All his gentleness was gone; he was not only grave and severe, as a man who sees himself forced to the performance of a hard duty, but plainly in a bad temper. His tact had been foiled, his authority set at nought; he was no longer the mediator between two great parties in the Church, but the tool of one which he had many reasons to hate and fear. So his anger recoiled upon those who were powerless to resent it. Never man in the world, he said, had been so outraged as he had been by their obstinacy, their pride, their disobedience, their rebellion. They were rebels to their Church and their Archbishop, and as such he declared them disqualified for participation in the sacraments. So saying, he turned his back upon the cries and lamentations which broke forth at his words. Some appealed to Jesus Christ, and his justice. Others declared that the manifest passion with which the sentence had been delivered, itself rendered it void. One ancient woman bewailed the hard alternative to which they were reduced: "We have been deprived of the sacraments," she said, "for not signing the Formulary; while, if we had committed so great a sin, we must have inflicted the same penalty upon ourselves." Suddenly the Archbishop perceived that many persons, and among them the Princesse de Guemené, were waiting in the court below. His anger blazed out again. He forbade the sisterhood, with many threats, to communicate with any person outside the gates. The Abbess in vain tried to remonstrate. "Hold your

tongue," he cried; "you are a little obstinate thing, that has no sense, and meddles in matters of which it knows nothing; you are a little pert minx, a fool, and ignorant woman, who says she knows not what; I can see that in all your behaviour, it is plain upon your face." To this tirade, delivered in such a voice as to make it quite audible through the open windows to all who were in the courtyard, the only reply was, that in Heaven was another Judge, who would deal more equitably with them. "Ay, ay," he said, "when we get there, we shall see how things go." But he had himself, some one ventured to remind him, acknowledged their innocence. "Yes, I have already told you that you are good nuns enough except for your self-will; I find no other fault with you. You are very virtuous; pure as angels and proud as Lucifer—you have a devil's obstinacy and pride." He was pleased with his phrase: "pure as angels, proud as devils," he thundered in Madame de Gueméné's ear, as he hastened through the courtyard, and so away. And the poor sisters flocked into the church, to chant the Miserere, and then to draw up one more ineffectual protest.

Two or three days more passed away; during which agitating rumours were almost hourly brought to Port Royal. Now the Archbishop had held a long consultation with Père Annat. Now he had called together a council of the enemy. Now he had been seen going from convent to convent, evidently to prepare places of imprisonment for the recusants. His angry words were duly reported. "These women," he had been heard to say, "make it a point of honour not to sign, and I make it a point of honour to force them to sign." At last, on Tuesday, August 26th, it became plain that the period of suspense was really at an end. Six nuns of the convent of the Visitation, in the Rue St. Antoine, had been brought to a house in the Fauxbourg, to be ready when they were

wanted. D'Andilly too, now in his seventy-sixth year, had come from Pomponne to comfort his sister and his daughters, by his presence. The morning was spent in prayer and tearful leave-takings; none knowing who might be chosen, and who left, yet all certain that the honour of suffering for the good cause would fall upon the Abbess, and those who bore the hated name of Arnauld. La Mère Agnès, the natural head of the community, of which she had been a member for nearly sixty years, and entitled to filial reverence, not only by her own virtues, but as the living representative of her greater sister, seized the opportunity to beg the sisters' pardon for all her faults and shortcomings towards them; and to ask them never to believe any report that she had forsaken the truth, and signed the Formulary The nuns, touched with these humble words of their beloved mother, were still weeping round her, when the Archbishop arrived with a train of seven or eight coaches. A great cavalcade to carry off twelve helpless women! M. de Paris himself, with his train of almoners and grand vicars; all the chief officers of the city police; four commissioners in full array; women to attend upon the prisoners, and about one hundred armed men, archers and others, who had patrolled the cloister throughout the morning, and now occupied the courtyard. As the Archbishop descended from his coach, D'Andilly knelt before him:—"I am very unhappy, my lord, to have lived seventy-six years, to see what I am about to see, this day,"—and entreated, as a last favour, that his sister and daughters might be given into his keeping at Pomponne. It could not be; the arrangements were all made, and must be carried out.

The sisterhood received the Archbishop in full chapter. He addressed them in few words, announcing his intention of taking away twelve, and placing them in safe custody in other religious houses. Among these were the Abbess,

the Prioress, La Mère Agnès, her three nieces, and the Sœur Anne de St. Eugenie, well known in the world as Madame de St. Ange. As a special favour, Marie Angélique d'Andilly was permitted to accompany her aunt, whose infirmities compelled her to use the services of an attendant. The Abbess answered the Archbishop with a quiet protest against the whole of his proceedings, in which the community joined with a single voice. "What," shouted M. de Perefixe, "appeal against your Archbishop! Take care what you do, lest you make matters worse. As for that, I laugh at it: protest, appeal, do what you will: you shall obey me!" And with this he made a motion, as if to call up the armed force which waited below. The Abbess and many of the sisters assured him, what he must have known very well before, that they would give way without provoking a needless display of violence.

His temper had now completely got the better of his dignity. He rudely separated the twelve from the embraces of their companions, and ordered them to betake themselves into the choir, whither he pursued them with reproaches and threats, which could never be other than brutal and were now useless too. He threatened La Mère Agnès, whose movements at seventy-three years of age were too slow for his impatience, that if she did not hasten, she should be carried out by his archers, neck and heels. When the Abbess, on reaching the door, asked him whither she was to go, he rudely pushed her out, and told her, that it was enough for him to know. At the gate D'Andilly waited. The spectacle must have been one that stirred all his pity and indignation. First came his sister: —with himself and M. d'Angers, and Antoine Arnauld, all that was left of his father's twenty children—scornfully cast out from the house which her virtues had helped to make famous, and where she had reasonably hoped that an

innocent life would be closed by a peaceful death. "It seems, brother," she said, "that as Caiaphas said formerly, it was necessary for one man to die, lest all the nations perish: so one might say now, that it is almost necessary for one house to be destroyed for the truth, that all the rest may not lose the knowledge of it." Next his three daughters knelt to ask his blessing, not knowing whether they should ever see him more. He gave it with many words of comfort and encouragement: and then taking them by the hand, led them back into the church, and at the altar once more solemnly devoted them to God's service, in whatever method and place He might choose to have them serve. And then he accompanied them again to the coaches, and bade them and their fellow prisoners God speed.

They were distributed among the convents of various orders. Presently I shall have to tell the story of the petty persecutions which they had to endure at the hands of women, whom the natural kindliness of their sex, as well as the tie of a common vocation, ought to have inspired with respect and forbearance. They were cast upon their own faith for support and comfort. As Angélique de St. Jean was being conducted to the place of her imprisonment, the ecclesiastic who was with her in the coach, began to offer some words of consolation. She looked at the red cross on her vestment, which was the badge of her order, and replied: "Sir, I no longer expect consolation from men, but only from Jesus Christ. We bear his cross with us, and in it I would place all my trust." So was it with them all.

Meanwhile the Archbishop was insulting the community which he had himself pronounced free from all suspicion of immorality, by a rigid inspection of the conventual buildings; in which he was aided by the Lieutenant Civil, and other chief officers of police What more could

have been done to them, they said, had they been guilty of the grossest crimes against society and the King? At last these functionaries, whose orders had been simply to obey the directions of the Archbishop, retired of their own account; disgusted, if we may trust the rumour of the day, with the painful position in which they had been uselessly placed. Then once more the nuns were called together: the sisters of the Visitation, who throughout the day had been waiting hard by, were summoned, and imposed in a long speech upon the recusant community. In vain they declared their unwillingness to receive any mother, but the one who had been lawfully set over them by free election. La Mère Eugenie, with her five coadjutors, and M. Chamillard, were left to break, if they could, the resolution of the now divided and dispirited sisterhood. Not till six o'clock had the Archbishop finished his long day's work. He had done well, yet not well enough for the savage bigotry of some. "The Archbishop has dealt too gently with the nuns of Port Royal," said M. Bail; "if it had been in Spain, they would have been dressed like devils, and burned alive."

One piece of retaliation the nuns practised: which was perhaps not intended for revenge, and yet admirably answered the same purpose. They prepared a procès-verbal of all the undignified things that M. de Perefixe had said and done on the memorable 26th of August, and so published their wrongs to the world. And the world, if it did not unanimously sympathise with the nuns, unanimously laughed at the Archbishop: a hard trial for any man, hardest of all for a Frenchman, to bear. *

* Divers Actes, rel. ii. pp. 93—115.

VIII.

On the morning of the 26th of August, 1665, the community of Port Royal consisted of seventy professed and fourteen lay sisters. The latter, not coming within the scope of the royal edict enforcing the signature, were left in peace. Of the former, twelve, as we have just seen, were carried away into solitary confinement, and their places, as natural and legal heads of the house, supplied by sisters of a strange order, whose rule was remarkable at once for its ceremonial laxity, and for the stress which it laid upon the duty of canonical obedience. What means could have been adopted better calculated to break down the resistance of Port Royal to the Formulary? The twelve prisoners were exposed to every battery of argument, reproach, and threat, which could be brought to bear upon them, and, at the same time, deprived of the encouraging consciousness of a common resolve, and a common constancy. The great body of the community were cut off from intercourse with those stronger minds, and firmer wills, which it was supposed had confirmed them in disobedience, and exposed to all the dangers which might spring from weakness and treason. When we have seen how every action was watched, and every difficulty placed in the way of their meeting and consultation; that the Archbishop's authority and the daily influence of the confessor were made to weigh upon the same side; that, as far as possible, all news from the outside world was admitted to them only through a medium distorted by prejudice; that the spiri-

tual terrors of the Church were freely used against them; that, day by day, they were besieged by the earnest solicitations of friends and relatives to yield, and so save their tottering house, we shall wonder, not that so many, but so few, gave way. But what shall we say of their persecutors? I find in an anonymous letter, preserved among the voluminous records of this period, a passage which admirably characterises the conduct of the Archbishop*:—

"It is said in the world that he obtained his archbishopric only on the express condition that he should do what he has done. This would be the most detestable of all simonies; nor did any one ever better exemplify that word of the Son of God, 'The thief comes not, unless that he might steal and slay,' than this archbishop. He enters a diocese full of irregularities, and sees none of them. He finds some curés zealous against perversions of morality, and he begins by imposing silence upon *them*, without saying one word against those who proclaim and practise these wicked maxims. The majority of the monasteries of his diocese are full of simonies and of divisions, to say nothing of other disorders, and he does not so much as think of applying a remedy. There is one free from all these evils, perfectly united, full of truth, of charity, of disinterestedness, and he forms a plan to destroy it; and as he finds no pretext for this in already established laws, he enacts a new one, which he knows to be contrary to the consciences of the sisters; and because they cannot obey it, he punishes them for this pretended disobedience by utterly overthrowing the monastery, by sowing division amongst the inmates, by carrying off its heads scandalously, and imprisoning them cruelly, by keeping the rest in captivity harder still to bear. And this is what it is to be an archbishop, bound to the Jesuits either by love or fear."

* Divers Actes, rel. ix. p. 31.

The story of the ten months' captivity under La Mère Eugenie, as told by the nuns themselves in the letters and memoirs still extant, is sufficiently prolix.* No strictness of watch could prevent them from writing and receiving letters. Their constancy raised up friends for them where they expected it least: now one of the nuns of the Visitation helped them, and now a confessor of the archbishop's own appointment. Then, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, a plentiful crop of acts, appeals, protests, procès-verbaux, perpetually made their way from Port Royal into the world, proving that if the community were condemned with or without justice, it was not in human nature to be condemned silently. Once they brought their case before the Parliament of Paris, and were apparently in a fair way to obtain a hearing, when the King suddenly interfered, and forbade the Parliament, under heavy penalties, to exercise jurisdiction. Once the Queen-mother, Anne of Austria, came to Port Royal to take counsel of La Mère Eugenie, who was esteemed by her order as almost a second Mère de Chantal. One of the sisters threw herself at the royal feet, recounting, with many tears, how wofully they felt the deprivation of the sacraments at the great festivals of the Church; but the Queen declared that obedience to the Archbishop was the only road to the King's favour, and roughly turned away. There was no alternative but signature or dispersion and imprisonment.

The sisters were at first at a loss to know how to treat La Mère Eugenie and her nuns. Then, following a code of instructions which, in anticipation of such a case, had been drawn up by Agnès Arnauld, they recognised her as temporarily set over them by the Archbishop, yet as in no way filling the place of their own lawfully elected abbess.

* Divers Actes, rel. v. vii. ix.

For the first few days no very strict watch was kept. The nuns of the Visitation and M. Chamillard were zealous in their vocation of entreaty and persuasion. The interdiction of the sacraments was removed. The keys of the monastery were, indeed, delivered to the new comers, and no sister was permitted to receive any visitor at the parlour wicket unless one of the six were also present; but no obstacle was thrown in the way of free consultation and intercommunication. After a time the reason of this became obvious. M. Chamillard had been able to introduce into the house some of what he thought the true leaven, and he hoped that, if left to itself, it would leaven the whole. Meanwhile, warned by his previous failures, he was conducting his own operations with greater caution. He did not now directly urge the signature, but recommended to his penitents indifference and silence. All he asked of them was, that they would take no resolution against signing; that they would learn to look upon it as a possible alternative; above all, that they would cease to make the refusal a subject of conversation and debate. The result of all this was made plain on the 12th of September. Then the Archbishop came, and, to the sorrowful surprise of the rest of the community, received the signatures of seven. The only name known to us is that of Flavie Passart, who, in former days, had been mistress of the boarders, and in that capacity had assisted at the miracle of the Holy Thorn. But within a fortnight more, four, if not five, had followed the example of the first seven.

It is not difficult to believe the assertion of those who held out, even if it were confirmed by no corroborative evidence, that none of those who yielded so lightly were among the braver spirits, or the purer souls of the community. Some probably had been kept in an attitude of opposition by the combined moral force of the sisterhood; and yielded to authority as soon as this support failed

them. Flavie Passart was by nature ambitious and intriguing; she desired what honours the monastery had to bestow, and now clearly saw that the way to the abbess' stall did not lie through persecution and imprisonment. So she became, heart and soul, the Archbishop's creature: spied, coaxed, schemed, threatened, lied, to serve his purposes, and all with the cunning and venom of an apostate. But there were others, too, whose weakness deserves a word of explanation and of pity, who were truly anxious to serve God and the Church with a clear conscience, and who therefore yielded now to the weight of authority and argument, and now, with deep remorse and many tears, recoiled to the old vantage ground of simple desire to bear witness only to the truth. Such was Sœur Madeleine de Ste. Candide, one of the twelve who were carried off on the 26th of August. She was placed in a convent of the Visitation at St. Denys; there assiduously plied with arguments and threats: alarmed at last by the thought that she might possibly die, while still deprived of the sacraments: till absolutely without the guidance on which she had been taught to depend, she yielded to the solicitations of those about her, and signed the Formulary. Then, having been brought back for a time to Port Royal de Paris, the old feelings and convictions resumed their sway: all her sympathies were against Sœur Flavie and her party, and with the broken-spirited few, who still stood fast; and she retracted her signature with far more confidence and joy than she had given it. She had yielded for the sake of the sacraments: the day after her retractation, she was once more deprived of them; but "I re-entered," she says, "into the combat, by the side of my sisters, and I was delivered from all my troubles." *

The story of Sœur Madeleine de Ste. Melthide is a

* Divers Actes, rel. iv. pp. 130—148.

more remarkable instance of the same kind. She was the sister of Thomas Du Fossé, once, with his brother, a pupil in the schools of Port Royal, and known to us as the author of a valuable volume of Memoirs. The whole family owed what would technically be called their conversion to that M. Guillebert, who had so great an influence upon the household of the Pascals; and from the time of the first establishment of the hermit community, we find them closely connected with Port Royal. Sœur Melthide was highly esteemed in the house for her humility and charity; so that, when at the end of September, 1664, she signed the Formulary, the grief and consternation were very great. "Her signature hurt us more," writes one of the nuns, "than those of all the other nine." * This step was not taken without much inward conflict. She would not sign, except on the condition that by her signature, she should not be considered to condemn the sisters who still stood firm. She deeply felt the separation from her old companions, which her own act had effected. The next day, she repaired to their assembly, and on her knees entreated them, with many tears, to believe that she had been compelled to sign by the force of the arguments brought to bear upon her, and that she would never engage in any hostility to them. "I pray God with all my heart," she concluded, "that if I have offended Him, He will punish me in this world." The last words showed that a reaction was already commencing, and that remorse would soon occupy her soul. Little by little, the grief of her relatives, and the example of her still unshaken companions, completed the process; and, on the 23rd of November, she made a retractation of her signature, and humbly asked pardon of God, and of the sisterhood, for having given it. Then the Archbishop,

* Divers Actes, ix. p. 61.

loth to lose so promising a proselyte, interfered with the strong hand, and sent her to the nuns of the Visitation at St. Denys, to be once more brought to a sense of duty. None so brave now as Sœur Melthide; none so uncompromising in even the forms of resistance; none so fertile in promises of steadfastness. Yet soon threats and expostulations did their work upon her weak, though sincere, nature; and she was harassed into a second signature, followed, in due time, by a second retractation. When, in 1665, the recusant sisters were united in a common imprisonment at Port Royal des Champs, Sœur Melthide was not thought worthy of a place with them; and, till 1669, remained an inmate of the then degenerate house of Paris. But when the peace of the Church permitted the community to settle themselves quietly in the old home, she threw herself upon their indulgence, and asked for a renewal of the former friendship. It was not refused: and for twenty-seven years she lived among them, what must have been, to a sensitive mind, a life of perpetual humiliation. Yet the fact that, before her death in 1696, she had filled the office of sub-prioress, shows that the sisterhood were more merciful to her than her own conscience, and that they had forgotten, in the tranquil virtues of her declining years, the alternate weakness and self-confidence which had betrayed the common cause in her youth.*

From the 12th to the 24th of September, the Archbishop took no new measures, in the hope, probably, that Sœur Flavie and M. Chamillard would be successful in their work of persuasion. But on the latter day he came in a great rage. The procès-verbal of the 26th of August had been published, and Paris, Anti-Jansenist as it was at heart, had no scruples of conscience which prevented it

* Divers Actes, rel. ix. pp. 60, 61, 87, *et seq.* Du Fossé, p. 250. Besoigne, vol. ii. p. 459.

from laughing at the Archbishop. So M. de Perefixe called the nuns together, donned his spectacles, and in his own sacred person read the offending document to its authors. Would they dare to support its statements in his presence — especially when he called heaven and earth to witness their malicious falseness? Alas for the Archiepiscopal dignity — still more for the Archiepiscopal temper! The nuns quietly adhered to all that they had published: and to prove that he was not in a passion on the 26th of August, the Archbishop raged and stormed now, till his nose began to bleed. Then he proceeded to remove from their posts the officers of the monastery, who still represented the old, lawful régime: and filled up their places from the seven who had signed the Formulary. Sœur Flavie was appointed Sub-prioress: the infirmary, the sacristy, the refectory, the wicket, were all placed in charge of the traitors. The effect was almost instantaneous. "In half a day," says one of the nuns, "we were like strangers in our own house." * Every movement was watched. If a sister was seen to turn in any other direction then to the church, the refectory, or her cell, she was followed in the hope of discovering the secret of the correspondence with the outside. It was almost impossible for two or three to meet together for consultation or encouragement. While the Archbishop and the Confessors loaded the seven with flattery and confidence, the rudest threats, the harshest reproaches, were heaped on those who still were obdurate. Deprivation of the sacraments, the severest possible penalty to those who were taught to consider themselves the mystic spouses of Christ, and to see his real body and blood upon the altar, was frequently and arbitrarily inflicted upon them. Even their faithful and zealous agent in secular affairs, M. du Plessis

* Divers Actes, rel. vii. p. 29.

Akakia, was summarily sent to the Bastille, and their property placed in strange hands. Separated from their leaders, weakened by desertion, cut off from every outward source of strength and consolation, placed under the ban of the Church, uncertain from day to day whether a fresh treason was not growing up in the midst of them;—it was a brave and noble testimony which they bore to their conception of truth speaking.

The work of counsel, of encouragement, of managing the correspondence which was still carried on, and of drawing up the numerous appeals and protests in which the community recorded its wrongs, fell upon two of the younger nuns, whose names are not yet known to us. One, the Sœur Madeleine de St. Christine Briquet, at this time only twenty-two years of age, was the granddaughter of one, the niece of a second, Avocat-général, of the family of Bignon. She became a boarder in the monastery when she was three years old, and, if her own inclination had been consulted, would never have left it. But the death of a sister made her a great heiress, and her friends were unwilling, that however sincere her vocation, she should spend her days in the convent, which had been thought a fit retreat for her when a portionless child. At sixteen, therefore, she made a trial of the great world, and was sought in marriage by many persons of distinction: but, after a few months, quietly donned once more her robe of serge, and threw in her lot with a community which was already the mark of calumny, and was soon to be the victim of persecution. Her coadjutor in this time of trouble, Sœur Anne Marie de St. Eustoquie de Flécelles de Bregi, was of still more distinguished birth; being the daughter of the Count de Bregi, cousin of Cardinal de Retz, and god-daughter of the Queen-mother. She too was not thirty when she took the veil in 1660. During the three months which followed the 26th of

August, and until they were themselves carried off to separate imprisonment, these two women were the real heads of the house, the enemies who started up to oppose and thwart the Archbishop, as strong and versatile as the Arnaulds, whom he had in vain sequestered from the community. Some even of the friends of Port Royal were disposed to criticise their courage and activity: to think that they were too ready with arguments and replies, and forgot sometimes that they disputed with an archbishop. It is hard to find fault with the method of a fight, fought so bravely and successfully against such odds: what long, wordy dispute was ever brought to its close without innumerable small offences against a sensitive taste? Perhaps the truest thing to say is, that the gentle bosoms, which no sense of wrong can rouse to an undue energy of expostulation, are hardly fit for the rough work of controversy. And it is a striking instance of the spirit of Port Royal, that though Sœur Christine survived till 1689, and Sœur Eustoquie till 1684, neither of them again occupies a conspicuous place in its annals. When need was, they spoke truly, and acted bravely. When the occasion had passed, they were content to serve God in silence.*

I omit the details of a visit which M. de Paris paid to Port Royal des Champs on the 15th of November.† Of twenty-six professed nuns, who with six lay sisters formed the community, not one could be cajoled or threatened into signature. The usual result followed; a lettre de cachet for the removal of the confessors; sentence of deprivation of the sacraments pronounced against the nuns; an endless succession of fruitless protests and appeals. Meanwhile, as the year drew to its close, the situation of the community of Paris grew more and more hopeless. On

* Besoigne, vol. iii. pp. 118, 126. Nécrologe, p. 446.
† Divers Actes, rel. v.

the 29th of November, Sœur Melthide du Fossé, who had just made her first retractation, Sœur Eustoquie, and another sister, were taken away; and on the 18th of December, Sœur Christine Briquet. Then, before long, fresh instances of weakness discouraged the steadfast. The news of Sœur Melthide's second signature was exultingly reported; the oldest sister, a woman of seventy-two, wishful perhaps to die in peace, followed her example; then one of the sisters De Buzenval, relatives of the Bishop of Beauvais, a prelate who still resisted the Formulary, deserted to the foe. The festival of Christmas was a season of trial, rather than of rejoicing, to those who were interdicted from partaking of the visible bread of life:—"We have passed the festival of Christmas," writes one, "with joy and in tears. Never were Vespers better and more bravely sung than on the eve of that day. . . The communion of the High Mass was watered with many tears, and with sighs which almost rose into a cry. I must confess that this somewhat mortified me; that I think we ought to act with more constancy and wisdom. It is not that I blame tears, which, for such a cause, are truly praiseworthy, and at these times are difficult to keep back. . . But I think that we ought to restrain these external manifestations of grief, and let the world see that we freely and courageously reduce ourselves to this condition, rather than fail in our duty to God; that we deprive ourselves of Him—that is to say, of His Body—rather than offend the truth by a lie."*

The year 1665 witnessed a new development of the controversy. Louis XIV. instructed his ambassador at Rome to procure from the Pope an order, commanding all ecclesiastics to sign the Formulary, which had been adopted by the French Bishops. On the 15th of Fe-

* Divers Actes, rel. ix. p. 115.

bruary, therefore, Alexander VII. complied with this request, by issuing a bull, which imposed the signature of a new Formulary contained in the bull itself, upon all ecclesiastics, nuns, and schoolmasters. This bull was supported by a royal declaration, dated April 25th, in which the King ordered every archbishop and bishop of his kingdom to enforce the signature in their respective dioceses. Presently we shall have to say something of the general effects of this new Formulary; now we have to do only with its operation at Port Royal. On the 13th of May, M. de Perefixe issued his order for the signature. He relied no longer on the distinction between *foi divine* and *foi humaine;* but spoke much and confusedly of a certain acquiescence in regard to the "fait;" a term which he probably did not wish to be clearly defined and understood. The new Formulary itself was clear enough. It ran as follows:—"I, the undersigned, submit myself to the Apostolical constitution of the Sovereign Pontiff Innocent X., given the 31st day of May, of the year 1653; and to that of Alexander VII. his successor, given the 16th of October, 1656. I sincerely reject and condemn the Five Propositions, extracted from the book of Cornelius Jansenius, entitled 'Augustinus,' in the proper sense of the said author, as the Apostolic See has condemned them by the said constitutions. This I swear, so help me God, and these holy Gospels." *

The new Formulary was an occasion of discomfiture to M. de Perefixe which he little expected. No sooner was his mandate issued, than he hastened to Port Royal, to superintend its execution. After he had explained to the assembled community the bull and his own order, he called for a table, and writing materials. La Mère Eugenie signed first; then her own nuns, then the seven

* Gerberon, vol. iii. p. 163, *et seq.*

sisters of Port Royal who had first fallen away; then two others. Four remained, who had signed the previous Formulary; but who refused to repeat an act which they already regretted. One, the senior of the house, excused herself on the ground that she was nearly eighty years of age, and that she should lose her senses, if she were tormented with such questions any more. The Archbishop angrily accorded to the nuns a respite of three months; and left the monastery more perplexed than ever. They could not be more closely watched than they were; his menaces and reasons were alike familiar, and ineffectual; the whole community was broken spirited and failing in health; they knew that he had conquered some of their most distinguished companions—some even that bore the name of Arnauld—in their solitary imprisonment; but still they resisted, and even lessened the small number of his original proselytes. It was plainly time that other plans should have a trial.* Let us turn meanwhile to the story of those who were in captivity.

The somewhat prolix memoirs of their ten months' imprisonment, which the sisters afterwards drew up, tell the same tale again and again with but little variation. An enforced seclusion, almost amounting to solitary confinement: no conversation except such as assumed the form of entreaty and reproach: a prohibition to approach the sacraments, and hindrances thrown in the way of those religious exercises, which to them were life's single occupation: no news from Port Royal and its friends, except such as rumour or prejudice had distorted into one shape: no spiritual guidance, unless by a confessor whose only object was to procure a signature: constant interviews with the Archbishop and his emissaries, with their worn-out arguments and accustomed threats:—these were the

* Divers Actes, rel. vii. ix.

means which bent the wills of some, yet only roused the courage of others to a firmer resistance. Of actual physical ill-treatment there was little, except such as is implied in the deprivation of air and exercise and society. Nevertheless it is not wonderful that in four cases at least, including the two already mentioned, the Archbishop should have gained his end. The sisters were not accustomed to stand alone. The spirit of community had been strong at Port Royal; each had fortified and encouraged the others: and all had rested upon the advice of Arnauld and his friends. But few of them could claim to be instructed either in the merits of the special controversy, or in the grounds and limits of canonical obedience. And although they might have been accustomed to the thought, that they were misunderstood and calumniated by all the world beside, it was a new and severe trial to encounter calumny and contempt personally and alone: to say nothing of the shock which it is to the clearest conscience, to find that its scruples are not shared by others, and are even treated as a positive offence against the moral law. Then the long agony of months spent in solitary self-communion, especially to a soul trained to an almost morbid self-inspection, and now restlessly pondering whether it were in the way of duty: the consciousness of alienation from the visible Church, and the doubt whether this might not truly be separation from the invisible body of Christ too: the anxious aspiration to please God, yet the hesitation, whether to persist were not to incur His just displeasure,—all helped to show once more, how much easier a thing it is to work or even to die for a good cause, than to sit with folded hands, and to wait faithfully for God's deliverance. All honour to those who won their way through this dreary valley of temptation! and for those who stumbled and fell no word of harsh judgment.

The circumstances of trial were not in every case the

same. Sœur Eustoquie had to pay the penalty of aristocratic birth in the eager and repeated solicitations of her courtly relatives. Father, mother, uncle: all thought it unbearable that one of their house, and a god-daughter of the Queen, should thus set herself in opposition to the Royal wish: and each in turn vainly strove to bend her resolution. She had been sent to the Ursulines of St. Denys, a convent under the exclusive direction of the Society of Jesus: where the good sisters held up their hands in pious astonishment, to see that the new comer saluted the image of the Virgin with respect. So too the lay sister, who acted as turnkey, and for some months was her daily and nightly companion, did not venture for three weeks to address a word to the dangerous heretic under her charge. Her activity in defending Port Royal by protests and appeals had been conspicuous: now, as a penance, she was allowed no materials for writing, and no book but the Bible. She was carefully watched, lest by chance she should speak to any sister of the house. Whenever news was brought, that a nun of Port Royal had signed the Formulary, a Te Deum was duly chanted in the convent church, and the sound smote upon the heart of the prisoner, bringing with it the fear of what her own weakness might be. Threats were not wanting. The King would interfere. "The King," she answered, "can take our heads, since he holds in his hands authority and the sword: but he cannot give us the belief in a disputed fact, which is necessary before we sign; that is out of his domain, and beyond his power." She should be stripped of her veil. "I have never," she replied, "placed my vocation in my habit, nor in anything external. Our habit is no other than the figure of Jesus Christ, wherewith St. Paul would have the faithful clothed." She should be transported a hundred leagues away. "Whither you will; all places are alike to me." She should be imprisoned within four walls:

she should have neither book nor work. "If I have neither book nor work, I shall have all the more time for prayer. The love of truth supplies the place of all else. Whoever loves truth with all his heart, possesses it: and as soon as it is possessed, its light and beauty penetrate everywhere, and make the darkest dungeon beautiful." When in July 1665, the order came that the Community was to be once more united in Port Royal des Champs, Sœur Eustoquie was still steadfast.*

Perhaps the best account of the trials attendant upon such an imprisonment as I have described, is that given by Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld, the fifth child and second daughter of M. d'Andilly, heiress not only of the name, but of the firm will and vigorous intellect of La Mère Angélique. Her place of confinement was the convent of the Annunciation, in the Quartier St. Antoine, which had been selected as the abode of the Marechale de Rantzau, a lady of considerable powers of mind, from whose influence much was hoped. On entering the convent, Angélique knelt to the superior, promising to pay her all due obedience and submission. She was first conducted to the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, — a mystery which, she says, was new to her, — and then to the room which had been prepared for her reception. A lay sister had been appointed, whose duty it was to watch her during the day; but at night she was to be left to herself. So far all was well; but when, after having spent some time in prayer, she tried to sleep, the sense of her situation, and the thought of all the separations which she had gone through, were too much for her, and her sleepless pillow was wet with abundant tears.

On returning from Mass next day, the turn of the key in the lock warned her that she was henceforth to be a

* Divers Actes, rel. iii. Captivité de Sœur Eustoquie.

prisoner. A daily attendance upon the offices of the Church; an occasional walk up and down the cloister, accompanied by a sentinel; a visit from the prioress, or Madame de Rantzau, were now her recreations. When she went to Mass, her attendant not only took her into the church and brought her back, but knelt by her side. Her room was in a part of the house which was but little used, and separated from the rest by three doors, which every night were duly locked and bolted. She feared that the company of her gaoler during the night might impose some restriction on her devotions; so, although she was greatly in terror of a sudden attack of illness, she put her confidence in God and her good angel, saying that, if she died for want of help, it would at least be in their company. This was her abode, and her way of life, for six months, during which time it often happened that, for nine or ten days together, she saw no one but her attendant, who remained in her cell only so long as was necessary to supply her wants. Then, not wonderfully, she began to find that she was losing the faculty of speech, and set herself to recover her voice by chanting her devotions, and reading to herself aloud.

The external persecutions to which Angélique was exposed, did not greatly differ from those which assailed her companions in misfortune. She applied to the Archbishop for permission to attend the sacraments, and met with a curt refusal. She was visited, though less often than others, by M. de Perefixe and his agents, who strove to persuade her, on the one hand, that the signature meant little or nothing; on the other, that it was a sacrifice which she owed to canonical obedience. The superiors of the convent followed the same line of argument, with as little success, but with a more harassing persistence. She was carefully informed of every signature, and every rumour of signature at Port Royal, till she began to think that she

stood alone in her steadfastness. But the chief interest of her narrative consists in the force with which she describes her mental struggles and difficulties. At first she was borne up by the recollection of the good cause for which she suffered. "I passed the first eight or ten days," she says, "in sensible affliction for our separation; but this affliction was only in my senses; and at the bottom of my soul I saw all the advantages of the trial. As I have said, I felt two persons in one: whereof one was strong enough to support the other in its weakness; and I rejoiced in the spirit over that which afflicted me in the senses." But, after a while, this high-strung resolve gave way, and was followed by the necessary reaction. It seemed as if all she endured were a punishment too light for her sins. Her only hope was, that the very lightness of the punishment was a proof of God's mercy. But her distress and self-abasement before God were so great, that she could not raise her eyes to the reasons she had to hope in His goodness. "As soon as I opened my eyes for that purpose, I cast them down again in confusion, and only sought to hide myself from Him. Nothing reduces us to so abject a poverty as this state of mind. Men, who believe that they take everything from us, do not even touch our treasure, if God leaves in our heart the sentiment of His grace: while He has only to turn away His face, and we find that we have none of those riches, which we were persuaded could not be taken from us." So, all her prayer was the prayer of Esther: "God, mighty over all, hear the voice of them who have no other hope, and deliver me from my fear;" till, after about six weeks' trial, hope, and with hope, peace gradually came back. She found pleasure in the contemplation of God's justice, as displayed in her own troubles. The wisdom with which He watched over herself, had brought her to the foot of the Cross, to learn the science of the Cross. And in listening, as she be-

lieved, to the lessons of her vocation, which her Lord thus taught her, she was content.*

It was not till February, that the rigour of her imprisonment was at all relaxed, and she was allowed, on parole, to walk through certain rooms and passages of the convent. During part of this time, she had been excluded from the common devotions of the house, and so had made her chamber into a church, where, day and night, she went through the same round of worship as was prescribed by the rule of Port Royal. She was herself choir, and, as far as might be, officiating priest. Two or three relics hallowed her church; what consecration so fit for a prison as that afforded by the bones of martyrs? She had woven the names of the sisters of Port Royal into a litany, and her prayers for each in turn went up in solemn order. Her midnight service was duly said, whenever she could rouse herself from sleep, and the stillness of the great city, never silent but at that hour, aided the darkness in infusing into her worship a deep and entrancing awe. Much of the time, which she did not spend in prayer, was occupied in light manual labour for the house; especially in teaching the nuns the art of moulding in wax, an industry in which she excelled. But she did not neglect the scrutiny and strengthening of her own position. She drew up a paper entitled "A sincere examination of the bottom of my heart, in regard to the signature," in which she condenses into a few paragraphs all the reasons which justified the nuns of Port Royal, and proved that though deprived of the sacraments, they were not in a condition of mortal sin. And when the nuns of the Annunciation had signed the new Formulary, and M. Chamillard had held one more ineffectual argu-

* Divers Actes, rel. viii. pp. 16, 17.

ment with Angélique, the Archbishop began to see that he was once more completely baffled.*

Both of Angélique's surviving sisters had been carried off from Port Royal on the fatal 26th of August. One, Marie Charlotte de Ste. Claire d'Andilly, was committed to the charge of the Filles de St. Thomas; and there, unable to stand alone, had, with much misgiving, signed the Formulary, and then bitterly repented of her weakness.† The other, Marie Angélique de Ste. Therèse, had been assigned as companion and attendant to La Mère Agnès. They were taken to the convent of the Visitation in the Fauxbourg St. Jacques. The room prepared for them was small, dark, and airless; looking through barred windows upon a little court surrounded on all sides by buildings. At first they were allowed to take a little exercise in a cloister, close at hand; but the Archbishop, as soon as he heard of the indulgence, issued a prohibition. The superiors of the house, and the ecclesiastics sent by the Archbishop, were the only persons with whom they were permitted to speak. La Mère Agnès was suffered to write to the Queen of Poland, and to her brother M. d'Angers, but only on condition that her letters were inspected and approved. Worn with age, and long service of the Church, she was compelled to endure privations, which to one of her feeble health, might easily have proved fatal; and to bear an insolent and contemptuous pity from those who were too ignorant to understand her difficulties, and too dull of heart to appreciate her virtues.

The honour—if honour it be—of having induced Sœur Marie Angélique to sign the Formulary under the very eyes of her aunt, belongs to no less celebrated a person, than the Abbé Bossuet. The steps by which the siege was

* Divers Actes, rel. viii.

† Divers Actes, rel. iv. p. 150, *et seq.*

carried, and the assault which ended in surrender, are hardly worth narrating here; for a simple nun to listen to Bossuet, was to yield to him.* But the attitude assumed by La Mère Agnès was beyond praise. That her niece should sign the Formulary would be a private grief, a family disgrace, a treason to Port Royal. No other event, always excepting her own signature, could be so woful to her. She might excusably exert the influence, at once of a mother and of an ecclesiastical superior. She was perhaps bound by a regard for truth to oppose a counteracting force to those set in motion by the Archbishop and Bossuet. Yet so great was her respect for the rights of the individual conscience, that she left her niece entirely to herself. "You are perhaps afraid of your good aunt?" said M. de Perefixe to his hesitating convert. She answered, "She is the first to whom I tell my troubles; I have no reserve with her, for I trust her entirely. I have told her that I wish to do nothing, which she does not also do, and she answered me in these very words—'Sister, say not so; you must not rest upon an arm of flesh; if you think you ought to do it, I shall not be disturbed, if only it is done advisedly.'"† So she signed upon the faith of a written declaration by the Archbishop, that her signature should be interpreted only as a respectful submission to a decision of the Holy See. And a few days after Agnès Arnauld writes thus nobly to her brother M. d'Angers:—"I must tell you that this dear child has opened her heart to me on this matter with such confidence, that if I had signified to her that I should be grieved by her acting differently from myself, she would never have done it. But God forbid that I should domineer over another's faith. I know that souls belong to God, and that it is His to give them the feel-

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. p 210.

† Divers Actes, rel. iv. p. 38.

ings which they ought to have. All that I have asked of her is that she should take advice, which she has done without any haste; on the contrary, she wished to have much more time than was allowed her. I have promised always to love her, which indeed she compels me to do in many ways, and especially by the manner in which she has acted; with so great a fear of God, and dread of offending Him. And this has made so deep an impression on her, that I have great difficulty in consoling her, as I think I ought to do; since she has had no other motive in what she has done, than the desire to follow the advice of a wise and godly person."*

The reaction was immediate. Sœur Marie Angélique saw the meaning of her act, the moment she had performed it. "One might say," writes La Mère Agnès, a few days after the last letter, "that by doing what she ought not to do, she has been turned to God and to the truth, in which she is at present so firm, that her greatest desire is to declare it. She has told me twenty times, all drowned in tears, that she will retract: thus the poison has been its own antidote. She is so ill of quartan fever, that I know not what will come of it. I have assured her throughout, that God, in wounding, wished to heal her. I have never seen such repentance. She holds herself in horror, and reveres all who stand fast. She cannot bear the congratulations of the people here, saying, that she followed the advice given her, with the utmost reluctance. But I cannot tell you the fourth part of what I would, on account of my sight, which prevents me from reading what I have written."†

The captivity of La Mère Agnès was not illustrated by the same unshaken firmness which her niece Angélique had displayed, which her greater sister would have dis-

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. p. 189.
† Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. p. 192.

played, in similar circumstances. She did not sign the Formulary, either in its first or its Papal form. When the latter was presented to her, she announced her intention of taking the full three months' grace, which the Archbishop's decree allowed. But at the same time, she renewed the application for permission to approach the sacraments, which she had already made more than once. "If you accord me the favour, Monseigneur," she writes, "to partake of them during these three months, you will give me the greatest help that I can have to obtain of God the grace to know and do His will, in separating myself from every prejudice and every attachment which might incapacitate me from following the light which He is pleased to give me, and which I will ask of Him *in indifference*, not being resolved not to sign."* The Archbishop eagerly seized upon the word, which had been suggested by his own emissary, and granted the favour. But what spiritual privilege can be freely tasted, if the conscience be clouded? La Mère Agnès soon saw that by accepting the explanation of this unfortunate phrase, offered by the confessor, she had dealt a severe blow against her own cause. He had persuaded her, that to be so fixed in an opinion, as to be resolved never to change it, was not a Christian frame of mind: and so she had professed a verbal indifference, which corresponded to no real vacillation in her own purpose. But those who were watching her course with eyes of affectionate admiration, could not but see that a compromise had been made with the common enemy: that the Archbishop would not have lightened his hand, except for what he at least thought a substantial concession. Before long, she saw this herself. "I confess my fault," she writes on the 24th of June, "and

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii p. 198.

do not wish to find an excuse for it. God has justly humiliated me."*

But the period of captivity was now rapidly drawing to a close. The experiment had been tried, and had failed. The only steadfast converts whom the Archbishop had made were Flavie Passart, and her companions: retractations tried his temper even more than refusals to sign: the King complained of the demands made upon his privy purse for the expenses of the prisoners; and the bishops energetically protested against a proposal to distribute the recusants among the dioceses of France. It was now therefore intimated to Agnès Arnauld, that, if she and her still obstinate sisters would ask the Archbishop to re-unite the community in Port Royal des Champs, the request would probably be granted. Upon this she acted; not however with the concurrence of the sisters of Port Royal de Paris. They could not, in conscience, they said, ask to be removed from a house which was lawfully their own; especially if they were to leave it in the hands of nine or ten unworthy members of the community, who might take permanent and exclusive possession of it. If they were commanded by their superiors to go, they would obey; but they could not voluntarily help to consummate an act of injustice and violence. They suspected, too, that the Archbishop might intend to leave some of the nuns to the seductive influence of the renegades: nor, again, were they willing to abandon the lay sisters, who had served them with faithful affection, to the tender mercies of Sœur Flavie. A long correspondence ensued, productive of no result: and then the Archbishop, as the community secretly desired, took the matter into his own hands. He hastily gathered together those who were confined in separate convents; on the 3rd of July, came once more to Port

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. p. 199.

Royal with a long cavalcade; and, in spite of solemn protest and appeal, transferred thirty sisters, not against their will, to Port Royal des Champs. Twelve more followed in a few days; and, before the end of the month, the old house in the valley was once more, in the eyes of the faithful, the only Port Royal.*

The meeting was, without doubt, a joyful one, even if something of shame and sorrow was mingled with the joy of those who had yielded to the solicitations of the enemy. To those who had formerly known the valley, its sacred quietness must have been unspeakably grateful, while it was hallowed to the imaginations of all as the cradle of the community. It was not a little thing to be united once more, especially where there were no prying eyes to put an ill construction upon every word and movement. But it soon became plain that the Archbishop intended to indemnify himself for the absence of espionage within, by vigilance without. Hardly had they arrived at Port Royal, when an officer and four men of the Royal Guard appeared, and established a strict watch about the convent. An architect was brought down from Paris, to inspect the buildings, and to report upon the security of the cloister. The soldiers took possession of the garden, where was the well, from which the community drew their water, and utterly disregarded the remonstrance made against this gross breach of conventual privacy. For nearly four years, the nuns were allowed to take exercise in the only place available for the purpose, or prevented from doing so, according to the variable courtesy of the officer in charge. A strange woman from Paris was placed at the "tour," or turning box, by which letters or any small packets were admitted to the house. Everyone whom necessity brought to the convent, was rigorously searched: and the servants were

* Lett. d'Agnès Arnauld, vol. ii. pp. 200—207. Divers Actes, rel. vii. 47, 50; rel. ix. pp. 201, 207; rel. xii. pp. 1—3.

threatened with prompt execution, if they were detected in the act of conveying messages or letters. And, to crown all, the community was compelled to furnish, from its scanty revenues, the provisions and other necessaries required for its own gaolers.

When the King had thus done his best to separate these dangerous criminals from the rest of the world, the Archbishop, on his part, strove to reduce them to an ecclesiastical isolation not less complete. It was necessary that the lay sisters, who had never been required, and so had never refused to sign, the Formulary, should have a confessor; and that the round of services in the convent church should be kept up. And we find accordingly more than one ecclesiastic mentioned as resident at Port Royal, between the years 1665 and 1669. But they seem to have been chosen with the design, that the inmates of the house should have as little religious instruction and consolation as the canon law allowed them, and no more. One had yet to perform his first mass when he was appointed. Another was plainly ignorant of the chief mysteries of the Church. All seem to have been convinced that the way to please their patron was to maintain with the sisters a perpetual war of petty annoyances and prohibitions. Nor was it hard to find occasions of contest. The first result of reunion was to restore the backsliding; to confirm the wavering, and once more to array the whole community in an attitude of determined opposition to the Formulary. Not many days after the return to Port Royal des Champs, a chapter was held, at which all who had signed, solemnly asked pardon of the sisterhood for their unfaithfulness. The ceremony was touchingly begun by an expression of contrition from the oldest sister, who had passed her eightieth year, and was too infirm to do more than stammer out her sorrow from the chair in which she had been brought into the chapter. But it was still more touchingly

concluded when Agnès Arnauld, who engaged all reverence, not only from her own age and virtues, but as the friend of St. Cyran, and the coadjutor of La Mère Angélique, suddenly rose from her seat, and, kneeling before the abbess, implored forgiveness from her, and the whole community, for her use of the fatal word, "indifference." At the same time she renounced the privilege of approaching the sacraments, which she had thus obtained, and placed herself on the same level of deprivation with all the rest. And when, in September, 1665, the three months' grace, given by the Archbishop, had expired, and he came to Port Royal to ask for signatures to the new Formulary, he received one answer from all.

The result was an Episcopal sentence, interdicting the nuns from chanting the daily office: the severest possible punishment to those who loved the devotions of the monastic life. They submitted, but only to the letter of the sentence; assembling at the appointed times in the choir, and reciting the office, each sister for herself, in a low voice. But the confessor, M. de Saugey, knew how to interpret the Archbishop's decree into a variety of small vexations. The great bell of the convent church might be tolled, but not rung: although its note was the signal for prayer, not only to the inmates of the house, but to the scattered inhabitants of a great parish. He would consecrate no wafer. He would bless no holy water. He would pronounce no benediction after mass. And every recurring festival of the Church raised a fresh debate as to the extent to which a community in the circumstances of the nuns of Port Royal, might be suffered to take part in it.

Meanwhile the house at Paris was being established on a new basis. The King's first impulse was to annul the right, which it possessed, of triennially electing an Abbess, and to take the nomination into his own hands: but it was recollected that fifty years before Agnès Arnauld had

resigned her coadjutorship only in favour of the right of election, and would become, if that right were taken way, *ipso facto*, Abbess. As this was not a desirable result, the few nuns, who now remained in Paris, were suffered to proceed to an election, which ended in the elevation of Sœur Dorothée Perdreau to the vacant chair. She held it, first by election and ultimately by royal nomination till 1684: the first of a line of abbesses, whom the community of Port Royal des Champs not unjustly stigmatised as schismatic, and with whom this story, in its further progress, will have little to do. The inhabitants of the valley were looked upon as a collection of recusants, without legal organisation or head, for whom it was necessary to provide no more than the means of a bare subsistence. The total revenue of the abbey was estimated at 28,823 livres, of which the community in Paris, consisting of twelve nuns and three lay sisters, was to receive 8,823 livres annually, while the remaining 20,000 was to be appropriated to the support of the seventy-one nuns and seventeen lay sisters at Port Royal des Champs. At the same time, as the latter body was not allowed to recruit itself by the admission of novices, the sum of 200 livres was to be deducted from the whole allowance for every death or removal. All the title deeds of the conventual estates, the management of the property, and the repairs of the buildings, were placed in the hands of the sisterhood at Paris.

It was, however, in the treatment of the sick, that the patience of the nuns was most severely tried. The unhealthy situation of the convent soon began to produce its accustomed effects upon those who were not inured to it: and the evil was aggravated by want of needful exercise. At first it was necessary to procure a royal order for the admission of the physician, every time there was need of his services, and even then, he was not permitted to enter

the cloister, till he had given a promise that he would not facilitate any communication with the outside. But after a time the sickness increased so much, as to necessitate the almost constant presence of a physician, and M. Hamon, who had formerly lived at Les Granges as one of the Solitaries, obtained permission to return, and to resume his function. We may pass over the detail of the vexations and hindrances under which he exercised his vocation, to turn to what in the eyes of the sisterhood was a far more serious evil than the deprivation of physical help, — the denial to the sick and dying of the comforts and offices of religion. One instance will perhaps sufficiently show the depths of meanness in the persecution of women to which the Grand Monarque, that model of French courtliness, could descend. On Monday, May 5th, 1666, it was plain that Sœur Marguerite de St^e. Gertrude, who had been ill for some days, was at the point of death. She had grown suddenly worse, and M. Hamon went in all haste to M. Poupiche, the then confessor, and implored him to come and shrive the dying woman. He was met by a curt refusal: the sole business of the confessor was with the lay sisters, and he could not comply with the request, unless under a special order from the Archbishop. There was no time to apply to M. de Perefixe: and the subsequent experience of more than one such occasion showed that the application would have been made in vain. So the sisterhood assembled in the sick chamber, and strove to sustain the courage of Sœur Marguerite by their united prayers. But few Protestants can know, from their own experience, what was the severity of the struggle fought out upon that obscure death bed. No friendly sympathy, no earnestness of prayer from unordained lips, could supply to the devout Catholic the place of the Viaticum for the last solitary journey, and the sacred oil, placed upon dying lips by a priestly hand. Only the

writing of two words: an assent by one who professed herself a true daughter of the Church, to a fact which the Church authoritatively declared, stood between her and the priceless blessing of the sacraments. But she clung firmly to the truth: and died with a word of forgiveness upon her lips, for the priest who had refused even to take his place among those who prayed with and for her.

But this was not all. M. Poupiche refused to say the usual mass for the repose of the departed soul. The Archbishop himself forbade the performance of the ceremonies of the Church over the body. It was made a matter of his "paternal kindness" that the sisterhood were permitted to assemble round the grave, and without singing, to imitate the regular funeral rites as best they could. And now, driven to the last extremity, they appealed from all human tribunals to the Heavenly Judge, in a form which, if material and superstitious, has yet a wild pathos and solemnity of its own. They drew up a procuration, addressed to the deceased sister, binding her by every motive of truth and love, to plead their cause in the august court, where she was about to appear. Her soul had escaped, like a bird from the fowler's snare: she was passing into the very presence of Christ: let her remember those whom she had left behind in sorrow and temptation, and implore the great Bishop to succour his Church. So when the appointed day came, the community met to sing the mournful vespers in the church: and then passed in solemn procession to lay the body of their sister in an unblessed grave. At the moment of interment the procuration was laid within the shroud, as if once more to remind the departed soul of the duties thus solemnly confided to it. And it is recorded in the conventual annals, with a pardonable superstition, that though a storm of rain preceded and followed the funeral, the black canopy of cloud, which overhung the mourners, held back its waters till their task was done.

Five sisters died during these years of captivity; and on each occasion the same cruelty, the same fortitude, and the same appeal to Christ, were repeated. But the last of these victims, Sœur Anne Eugenie, deserves a few words of special commemoration.

She was the daughter of M. de Boulogne, Governor of Nogent-le-Roi, a man held in great consideration, not less on account of his rank and wealth, than of his strong and worthy character. From the first, she seems to have been one of those happily constituted natures — rarely perhaps, to be found in the rougher sex — which are exempt from the severer trials of the religious life, and the manner of whose development is a quiet, constant growth in holiness. The reading of the life of St. Theresa awoke in her, at an early age, the desire of the monastic life, which so grew upon her, that when she was fifteen her sole thought was how to procure its gratification. But her father, with whom she lived in the most entire affection, was unwilling that his rich and beautiful child should be thus sacrificed: and being ordered on foreign service, resolved to put her fate beyond her own control. Before she was sixteen, she was hastily married to the Baron de St. Ange, first Maître d'Hôtel to Anne of Austria, and exchanged, for the splendour and intrigues of a palace, the quiet pleasures and charities of her country home.

Her married life was neither brief nor unhappy. M. de St. Ange was a favourite of his royal mistress; one who loved the court, and scattered money with a courtier's magnificence. So, one day, the young wife accidentally discovered that he was overwhelmed with debt, and that the fortune which she had brought him was no longer their own. She made no complaint, nor attempted to interfere with his pleasures; but she retrenched her own expenditure to the utmost possible limit, and invoked her father's friendly aid to do the rest. The result was, that she won

her husband's heart; and after a time, he left the court, and spent two happy years with her and their children at St. Ange. There, at the very time when he was about to enter upon her scheme of a religious life, he died suddenly; and his wife found herself at liberty to gratify her long-cherished desire.

But the desire had now taken a different form. As a girl, her hope had been to become a Carmelite; now all her wishes pointed to Port Royal. She had acquired the friendship of D'Andilly, and through him that of his sisters and of St. Cyran. For a time she had found it hard to win their confidence: in particular, the brusquerie of La Mère Angélique had greatly discouraged her; but her patience and evident sincerity conquered their love at last. She became a temporary inmate of Port Royal during her husband's lifetime, and when his death set her free, and the affairs of her family were all arranged, she begged permission to make it her home. And on the festival of the Presentation of the Virgin, 1654, she took the veil at the hands of La Mère Angélique. "If this one deceives me," Angélique had once said of her, "I will never have anything more to do with great ladies." But she was not deceived. D'Andilly lived to say of Sœur Anne Eugenie, that she had filled every relation of life with equal completeness: true maid, true wife, true widow, and at last the perfect nun.

The convent gate, like the grave, usually closes upon all the events of a life. So we hear little of Madame de St. Ange after her profession, except that her weak health debarred her from undertaking great charges, while her faithfulness was eminently conspicuous in small ones. She was one of the first twelve whom the Archbishop carried away from Port Royal, and passed the time of her imprisonment at the convent of the Visitation at Chaillot, so soon to become known as the retreat of Sœur Louise de la Miséricorde, the forsaken and repentant La Vallière. Here she was

treated with more indulgence than some of her fellow captives, but with as little effect in procuring a signature. And at the end of 1667 she sank under the mental and bodily privations, to which, in common with all her companions, she was exposed. She was buried, like the four sisters who had gone before her, with no blessing from the Church below, and an ardent appeal for mercy and justice to the Head of the Church above.

One of her last sayings was, that she should think herself happy, if she proved to be the last victim sacrificed to the peace of the Church. The storm was in truth already passing away. In a few months more it was made plain that her hopes were well founded.*

* Divers Actes, rel. xii. For the life of Mad. de St. Ange, *vide* rel. iii.

IX.

We must now leave for a time the fortunes of the nuns of Port Royal, to trace the general progress of the Jansenist controversy, and enumerate the causes which led to the great armistice, known as the Peace of the Church. It was in the year 1661, a few months before the death of Angélique Arnauld, that the persecution of Port Royal began, in the removal of the boarders, and the prohibition to receive novices, although, as we have seen, the unexpected death of the new Archbishop of Paris afforded the nuns a respite till 1664. But already in 1660, the schools of Port Royal had been forcibly dispersed. In 1661, the Solitaries, with the exception of one or two, who successfully hid their rank and education under the garb and speech of farm-servants, had spontaneously left Les Granges; and, hoping for better times, lived by twos and threes in the most secure hiding-places they could find. Pascal died in 1662; Singlin in 1664. Arnauld and Nicole, from their various retreats, carried on with inexhaustible industry the controversy of grace. De Saci was occupied, with the assistance of both, in revising the translation of the New Testament, which Le Maître had almost completed. And all were unwearied in their efforts to sustain the courage of the community, on which fell the chief weight of trouble and perplexity.

The Formulary, contained in the bull of Alexander VII., dated October 16th, 1656, was not imposed upon

the Church of France till April, 1661, a few weeks after the death of Cardinal Mazarin. The King, then for the first time his own master,—or, at least, free to follow the direction of his Jesuit confessor,—issued, at the request of the Assembly of the Clergy, a circular letter to each bishop, requiring him to sign the Formulary unconditionally, and to procure its unconditional signature by all ecclesiastics, nuns, and schoolmasters within his diocese.* The royal command did not meet with instant or complete obedience. A large majority indeed of the bishops complied: some with eager Molinist zeal; some with more or less mental reservation. The Sorbonne, which the King honoured with a separate letter, promptly made the signature a condition of taking and of holding all degrees. But the grand vicars of the diocese of Paris, acting in the absence of Cardinal de Retz, published the Formulary, with an order of their own, marking the distinction between "fait" and "droit." Arnauld, Bishop of Angers; Pavillon, Bishop of Alet; Godeau, Bishop of Vence, and Choiseul, Bishop of Comminges, not only refused to publish the Formulary, but wrote to the King in justification of their refusal. Buzanval, Bishop of Beauvais, signed, and procured the signature in his diocese, but not without conditions. Then ensued a long conflict of letters and state papers. The bishops wrote to the Assembly, affirming that neither it nor the King could lawfully impose a confession of faith upon the Gallican Church. The Assembly appealed to the Pope. So did Arnauld and Godeau. Next the King, by an order in council, dated May 1st, 1662, reiterated his demand of an unconditional signature; and made known his will by a special letter to three of the obdurate bishops, Angers, Beauvais, and Vence. Meanwhile the Pope had interfered to set aside the mandement of the

* Gerberon, vol. ii. p. 484.

grand vicars of Paris, which distinguished between the "fait" and the "droit:" and the Nuncio somewhat rudely informed M. d'Angers, that this brief was the only answer which his Holiness intended to vouchsafe to the appeal of the bishops. Upon this, the Bishop of Vence gave way, though not without a solemn warning to the King, that his policy was ill-calculated to produce that concord in the Church which he professed to have at heart. And Louis once more wrote to the Bishop of Angers, in the vain hope that the weight of the royal authority would counterbalance his scruples of conscience.*

A letter, published in the voluminous correspondence of Antoine Arnauld, and, though not dated, evidently written about this time, vividly describes the social, which, in addition to legal persecution, the party of Port Royal had to suffer. Fouquet, Superintendent of Finance, had been dismissed from his office in disgrace, and his published defence, which had given umbrage at court, was attributed to the pen of Arnauld. He thus writes to one of his friends †:— "It would seem, Monsieur, that, as all manner of calumnies have been uttered concerning me, for so long a time, I ought not now to wonder at any. And yet I confess that I am surprised at the report of which you inform us, that I am the author of the pieces published in defence of M. Fouquet. It would be impossible to invent a falsehood less like the truth, or to attack me on a side on which I am stronger. Men vainly look for me where I shall never be found. Nothing in the world is more alien to my disposition than to mix myself up in affairs of this kind. . . . . I have always thought that the only part which a priest and a theologian ought to take in politics, is to pray to God, ac-

* Gerberon, vol. ii. pp. 486—509 ; vol. iii. pp. 1—29. Besoigne, vol. v. p. 552, *et seq.*

† Lett. d'Antoine Arnauld, vol. i. p. 290.

cording to the injunction of the apostle for kings and their ministers, in order that we may lead a peaceable and tranquil life, in all exercises of piety and virtue."

After enumerating some reasons which make this story especially improbable, he goes on to say:—"It is thus difficult to find a more clumsy calumny than this, except two, that have had their share of success in their day; one, that I had assisted at an assembly of Deists, convened for the destruction of the Christian Religion, at a time, when by comparison of dates, it was proved that I was only ten years old; the other, which some one was not ashamed to carry to the ears of the Queen-mother, that I was in close communication with Cromwell. I expect that one of these days it will be said that I correspond with the Grand Vizier, and that we contemplate a retreat into Hungary under the protection of the Sultan. For we must admit, that if we have enemies so unscrupulous as to circulate all kinds of calumnies against us, we have this advantage too, that they are not ingenious enough to colour them; and that a mean malignity is apparent in all their inventions. Nevertheless, this is not without its effect. There are always people simple enough to listen to these lies; and although they destroy themselves one after another, our justification is never general or complete, because as soon as one slander disappears another takes its place for the world's entertainment. One year, it is the assembly of Bourgfontaine; another, Cromwell; another, many millions distributed among the enemies of the State; now, M. Fouquet, and after that men will forge some other. They will make us build forts and citadels to levy war against all the princes of Europe; thanks to this series of chimeras, some means of animating the people against the so-called Jansenists will never be wanting. For we have the honour of being treated almost like the primitive Christians. The Pagans laid it to their charge, if it did

not rain, or if the vines were frozen; and now it is the Jansenists who do all the evil in the world. There are no intrigues with which they are not concerned; and their associates are always wretched and odious persons. From all which I draw this conclusion, that we ought not to trouble ourselves with the eccentricities of men's judgment, but, heedless of all these rumours, ought to think only of winning His favour, before whom we cannot be maligned, and from whom we can conceal nothing. He is the protector of all who are wrongfully slandered; and we may hope that if He sometimes permits very wise and enlightened persons to be thus prejudiced, he will not suffer them long to remain in their error, but will make clear, as far as they at least are concerned, the truth of that word of St. Cyprian: 'Quod mendacia non diu fallant, noctem tam diu esse quam diu non illucescat dies: clarificato autem die luci tenebras et caliginem cedere, et quæ grassabantur per noctem latrocinia cessare.'"

Meanwhile, more than one effort was made to divide the Jansenist party, by overtures of reconciliation addressed to some of its principal members. Antoine Arnauld's well deserved reputation as a learned theologian and practised controversialist, procured him, in particular, several offers of amity from the less virulent among his opponents. But that the real leaders of the Molinist party never sincerely desired peace, and were resolved to be satisfied with nothing less than the extermination of their enemies, is, I think, plain from their behaviour during a long, and at one time, promising negotiation, begun and managed by the Bishop of Comminges. The bishop's idea was, that the leaders on opposite sides should meet, and leaving Jansen and his opinions out of the question, calmly discuss the Augustinian doctrine of grace, and ascertain the precise amount of their disagreement as to the Five Propositions. This he communicated to M. de Miramont,

President of the Parliament of Toulouse, who, in turn, proposed the conference to Ferrier, a friend of Père Annat, and his successor in the office of royal director. Ferrier and Annat both received the plan with apparent good will, and M. de Comminges turned to the Jansenists. After a little not unnatural hesitation, and some negotiations, which had for their object the exclusion of the Formulary and its signature from the debate, they too assented to the bishop's proposal. The King was now taken into counsel. He professed to feel great joy at the prospect of appeasing the discord which had so long troubled the Church, and summoned M. de Comminges to Paris, where he arrived on the last day of the year 1662.

The negotiation began by the preparation, on the Jansenist side, of five articles; in which they clearly set forth their doctrine as to the famous propositions. These articles, though signed only by Lalane and Girard, were understood to express the opinions of the more celebrated members of the party, and were submitted to Père Ferrier with the avowed purpose of proving that the Jansenist was no other than the Thomist, and therefore orthodox doctrine of grace. On the 25th of January, a conference took place at the lodgings of M. de Comminges. The last four articles were passed without dispute; the first resuscitated the debate as to sufficient and efficacious grace, but was altered, for peace sake, to express what both sides acknowledged to be an orthodox opinion. This unexpectedly rapid success was, however, interrupted at a second conference. It was not enough, said Père Ferrier, that they had agreed upon the orthodox doctrine; MM. Lalane and Girard must further condemn five other articles which he had drawn up. He did not assert that these last contained the doctrine of Jansen—*that* would be to break the agreement, by which all mention of the "fait"

was forbidden;—but to be orthodox, it was as necessary to condemn the false as to acknowledge the true. Once more the Jansenist deputies gave way; they declared that in their judgment Père Ferrier's articles were false, leaving it to the Holy See to decide whether they were heretical too, and identical with the Five Propositions already condemned. Once more all difficulties seemed to be removed, when, at a third conference, Ferrier again shifted his ground. If the matter rested with him alone, peace should be at once concluded, and the orthodoxy of the Jansenists acknowledged. But Père Annat had all sorts of people to deal with, and many scruples to satisfy; the signature was not an affair in which the Jesuits alone were interested, but enjoined by the Pope, the Bishops, the Sorbonne; why should his opponents hesitate to testify that they condemned the Five Propositions in the sense of Jansen? Needless to say, they did hesitate; and occupied two long conferences in attempting to show, that this was more than their adversaries ought to ask, or they to grant. But then the bishop, reluctant to see the result of his labours thus annihilated, interposed with a fresh expedient. The Five Articles should be sent to Rome, as a statement of Jansenist belief, and with them a form of submission as to the "fait," drawn out by himself and signed by the chiefs of the party. The Subjicimus, as it was called, ran as follows:—"Quoniam Summus Pontifex Alexander VII. illas Propositiones ex libro Jansenii extractas et in sensu Jansenii damnatas esse declaravit, illius definitioni etiam in hac parte sincere nos subjicimus." * Ferrier appeared to approve the compromise, and offered to engage the

* "Forasmuch as the Supreme Pontiff, Alexander VII., has declared that those propositions have been extracted from Jansen's book and condemned in the sense of Jansen, we in this respect also sincerely submit ourselves to his decision."

heads of his society in Rome to recommend it to the Pope.

But now a new difficulty arose. Up to this point the conduct of Lalane and Girard had met with the concurrence of all of those for whom they had acted: and many distinguished Jansenists were now willing to sign the Subjicimus. Not so De Saçi, and especially Arnauld. For a few months the letters of the latter are full of this difference, which threatened to make a breach, not only in the party, but even in the now lessened circle of his own family. M. d'Angers, and D'Andilly had both been won over by the Bishop of Comminges to his view of the question: Singlin and De Barcos added all the force of their authority and persuasion. Arnauld, almost in despair, quitted Paris, whither he had gone, under a safe conduct from the Court, to watch the negotiation: not, as his half-alienated friends said, that his absence might break it off, but because he was unfeignedly weary of compromises, which seemed to involve an ever-increasing danger to the interests of truth. He found it hard to be charged with alone preventing the restoration of peace, by resistance to an arrangement which, in his view, gave up the very subject of dispute. "I beg you to remember," he writes to Singlin*, "to what extremities I am reduced. They are raising up against me almost every friend I have in the world, even my own brothers. I am cried down every where as an obstinate and stubborn fellow, who, through attachment to his own opinion, alone stands in the way of the peace of the Church. And all the foundation there is for reproaches so painful as these, is, that I do not yield to the advice of the majority of our friends. As to the authority of the Saints, or their example, or the arguments which have formerly been our guide, no

* Lettres d'Antoine Arnauld, vol. i. p. 323.

one says a word: and the only appeal is to the opinion of five or six persons, to which I must defer, if I would not be condemned of God and man."

But the greatest trial of all was the temporary estrangement which sprang up between himself and his brother: "Have I then, my dearest brother," he writes to D'Andilly *, "henceforth no share in your heart? Is whatever esteem you have hitherto had for me entirely effaced from your mind? Must then this new alliance destroy your oldest ties, and make you incapable of approving anything in those of whom you have thought only too highly, as soon as they disagree with that friend who now seems to fill all your soul? No, I cannot believe that this will last: God will never permit it. He will re-kindle in your heart the flame of love which He lighted there, for those whom nature and grace have so closely united to you. He will give you the old trust in those who are always the same, whatever enemy of our happiness may trouble so perfect an agreement of will and of opinion. God has left in this world only us four — why should this wretched affair have come to divide us? We suffered our common persecution in peace and joy, as long as we suffered it with one accord. Why should the imaginary hope of a false peace with faithless and unscrupulous enemies have cast us into trouble? No, no, my dearest brother, once more I say, that so disturbed a state of things cannot last long. There are too many good souls groaning over it, not to obtain from God our deliverance from so heavy a cross. But the true method of deliverance is to implore Him to take away the cause of so sad a result, — our idle amusement in an impracticable accommodation, which has never been other than chimerical, because founded on the pretended good faith of those who know not what good faith is. Let us feed our

* Lettres d'Antoine Arnauld, vol. i. p. 396.

hopes no more on vain dreams: let us think only of suffering patiently what God shall be pleased to send us — and we shall all be at one."

In spite of Arnauld's persevering opposition, the Subjicimus was agreed to: and the greatest of the Jansenists left out of the proposed peace. But the result of the fifth conference fully justified his foresight. Père Ferrier refused to be content with anything short of a specific condemnation of the Five Propositions in the sense of Jansen: and all hope of an accommodation with the Jesuits was at once abandoned. There still remained the Pope. To him, therefore, M. de Comminges, with permission of the King, sent the five Jansenist articles, accompanied by a letter from himself, assuring His Holiness of the submission of the Port Royal theologians to the Papal decisions as to the "fait." The rumour ran through Paris, that now at last the strife was settled, and the Church purged of heresy. But on the one hand Arnauld, much to the vexation of M. de Comminges and many of his friends, thought it only honest to publish his discontent; and on the other, the Pope refused to ratify the compromise. On the 20th of August, a brief, addressed to the bishops of France, arrived in Paris, demanding from the Jansenists an unconditional signature. It mattered nothing that their declaration of faith was such as even Jesuits could not find fault with: they must sign their belief in Jansen's heresy, or be heretics themselves. Fifteen bishops, who chanced to be in Paris, formed themselves into an assembly, and issued the brief, with a circular letter to the several dioceses. Again the King aided the ecclesiastical authority with letters patent, commanding the signature: M. de Comminges retired in disgust to his diocese, and the Jansenists hid themselves once more.*

* Gerberon, vol. iii. pp. 31—72. Besoigne, vol. v. pp. 573—591. Lett. d'A. Arnauld, vol. i. p. 294; vol. ii. p. 215.

The early part of the year 1664 was signalised by the publication of the narratives, counter-narratives, explanations, and replies, which always follow such abortive negotiations as I have described, as well as by the scornful exposure of M. de Perefixe's distinction between "foi humaine" and "foi divine." In the month of August, Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, a prelate who, had not his Jansenism outweighed his virtues, would have taken his place beside Francis de Sales in the catalogue of Saints, addressed a spirited remonstrance to Louis XIV., impugning the authority by which the signature was enforced, and asserting the orthodoxy of the so-called Jansenists in all matters of faith. This he followed up not long after, by an "Admonition" to the clergy of his diocese, warning them not to peril their ecclesiastical privileges by signing the Formulary before the secular judges appointed by the King,—and on the 29th October, set them the example, by himself refusing the signature. This decisive act of opposition brought the controversy to a head. Hitherto the Papal authority had never been directly brought to bear upon the recusants. The various assemblies of bishops which had sought to enforce the signature had been insufficiently constituted, and irregularly held: and the liberties of the Church were pleaded in opposition to the commands of the King. But now the French ambassador at Rome was instructed to ask from Alexander VII. an authoritative and final declaration of opinion. Pleased to gratify the zeal of so great a monarch in the cause of orthodoxy, the Pope promptly complied, and issued on the 15th of February, 1665, a bull which not only condemned Jansenism in most decisive terms, but commanded all ecclesiastics, nuns, and schoolmasters, to sign a new Formulary, which made part of the bull itself, and which, it is almost needless to say, did not distinguish between "fait" and "droit." The

bull was duly received, and endorsed on the 25th of April, by a royal declaration of similar import.*

The crisis of the dispute had now arrived. No bishop who was not prepared to brave excommunication could refuse to impose the signature upon his diocese. But Jansenist ingenuity even yet found a middle way between unconditional submission to Papal authority, and a resistance, which would have been little short of schism. It was possible to *define* the signature. In this new refinement Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, led the way by a mandement, dated June 1st. He distinctly demands that all ecclesiastics under his jurisdiction should sign the Formulary, and as distinctly separates the fait from the droit. For the latter he asks a "submission of faith:" for the former only a submission "of respect and of discipline." Choart de Buzanval, Bishop of Beauvais, so far followed in his steps, as to adopt the very words of his mandement. Then Arnauld of Angers, and Caulet of Pamiers, each in his own way, published the Formulary with a similar definition of the signature. The Bishop of Noion took the same course, but alarmed a few months after, by the first murmur of court displeasure, withdrew his mandement, and retired into the main body of the episcopal ranks. The Four bishops — hardly less familiarly and less gloriously known in French, than our Seven bishops in English history — alone represented the cause of Jansen and of Port Royal.†

About the time of the negotiations for Alexander VII.'s bull, the friends of Port Royal endeavoured to repeat the experiment of the Provincial Letters, in making an appeal

* Gerberon, vol. iii. pp. 125, 143, 163, 167. Besoigne, vol. vi. p. 17. For the terms of Alexander VII.'s Formulary, *vide* p. 392.

† Gerberon, vol. iii. pp. 169—197.

from the theological to the general public. Through the years 1664 and 1665, appeared at intervals, a series of ten letters "Sur l'Hérésie Imaginaire" — bearing the name of the Sieur de Damvilliers, but known to be the production of Nicole. The idea and rough sketch of them were due, it is said, to Pascal; and it is easy to trace, in the first letter, the inspiration of his genius, if not the actual work of his pen. It dissects with great force and clearness the whole controversy, reducing the point in dispute, about which the Jansenists were willing to maintain a respectful silence, to the existence of the condemned propositions in the "Augustinus:" and then proceeds to parallel the debate with others even more trifling and laughable, which had in their day, divided the Church, and long before sunk into forgetfulness. But only the first of the Lettres Imaginaires has caught any of the spirit of their immortal predecessors. The other nine are no more than contributions to the controversy, as in those years it developes itself; written, it is true, in nervous and vivid phrase, and containing little that is scholastic, but ill calculated to catch the attention of those who were not already interested in the subject. One is a polemic especially directed against Père Ferrier; another narrates the feud with the Jesuits from the days of Garasse; a third demolishes M. de Perefixe's distinction between "foi humaine" and "foi divine;" a fourth, which was not originally intended to form part of the series, is a dissertation upon the effects of unlawful excommunication. The last, published in November, 1665, and said to be the joint work of Arnauld and of Nicole, is a powerful defence of the authority of the Church in matters of faith, but was as ineffectual as the rest in persuading the public that Jansenism was only an imaginary heresy.

A second series of eight letters by the same author, entitled "Lettres Visionnaires," usually form part of the same collection. The publication of these commenced in

December, 1665, and probably ended in May, 1666. Jean Desmarets de St. Sorlin—poet, novelist, French academician, and of late years mystic and prophet, had written an insolent reply to an "Apologie pour les Religieuses de Port Royal," of which MM. Nicole and St. Marthe were the authors. Such an enemy would hardly have been worth the ammunition expended on him, but for the tempting mark afforded by his past eccentricities. Nicole did not spare him. The "Lettres Visionnaires" were devoted partly to the exposition of true Christian Spiritualism, partly to the exposure of Desmarets and his "Lettres Spirituelles." The debate might here be safely passed by, without mention, were it not that a scornful allusion to Desmarets' previous occupation as a playwright and a novelist, excited the anger of Racine, who, fresh from the schools of Port Royal, had broken loose from their influence, and written his earliest tragedies, the "Thebaid" (1664), and "Alexandre" (1665). The story of the poet's wrath and the teacher's forbearance will be found in its proper place.*

The fortunes of Port Royal seemed to have reached their lowest ebb at the beginning of the year 1666. The sisterhood were indeed reunited in Port Royal des Champs, but they were prisoners in their home; and the house in Paris was held by strangers and traitors. The solitaries were scattered throughout France; Arnauld and the leading theologians of the party had returned to the hiding-places, which they had left for a time at the invitation of M. de Comminges. De Saçi, with his faithful companions Fontaine and Du Fossé, had been driven from the house in the Fauxbourg St. Marceau, where Singlin died, and

* Vie de Nicole, pp. 126—153. Gerberon, vol. iii. pp. 86—205. Les Imaginaires; ou Lettres sur l'Hérésie Imaginaire, 2 vols. 12mo., Liège 1667, *passim*.

after many changes of residence, had established himself in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine. The penitents, whom at the risk of his own liberty he still directed, no longer came to his house, but met him at places of rendezvous, with which his means of communication were speedy and secret. It was on his way to the most celebrated of the pupils whom Singlin had bequeathed to him, Madame de Longueville, that he was arrested, on the 14th of May, 1666. It appeared afterwards, that in hopes of discovering the clue to some treasonable intrigue, the house and all the movements of its inmates had been carefully watched for a fortnight. At last, in despair of finding out anything by these means, the officers of police resolved to arrest the criminals and to seize their papers. De Saçi and Fontaine, that they might enjoy the cool morning air, had set out on their walk at six o'clock; and while, under the walls of the Bastille, they were commiserating the fate of its prisoners, were stopped by a guard, and informed that they were themselves to be added to the number. On being taken to the nearest police-office they were searched, and some letters from his penitents, which De Saçi anxiously tried to hide, exultingly taken away. They bore the whole matter very quietly, as men who, though conscious of innocence, knew that it was no safeguard against such a disaster. De Saçi's single trouble was that he had left behind him his copy of St. Paul's Epistles. For more than two years he had constantly carried it about with him, in expectation of sudden arrest; and only this very morning had laid it aside, in consequence of the heat. "Let them do what they will with me," he had been wont to say, "wherever they put me, I fear nothing, if I only have my St. Paul."

Meanwhile a ludicrous scene was being enacted in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine. Between two and three hundred soldiers had been secretly brought together during the

night, "to operate," says Fontaine *, "against an unarmed man, and a house where there was not a single sword." The entrance into the fortress—as if resistance were to be expected at the doors—was made by a bedroom window. All persons and papers found in the house were summarily seized. The whole quarter was in commotion. The rumour ran, that a nest of burglars, coiners, poisoners, had been discovered. The public was just beginning to talk of the fearful poisonings, with which Madame de Brinvilliers was afterwards implicated; and M. d'Aubrai, the Lieutenant Civil, who made this arrest, was the father and victim of the yet undiscovered criminal, and perhaps had, at this very moment, her poison in his veins. At the same time, and with as little result, the house where De Saçi had been wont to meet his penitents, was ransacked. Then after a long examination of Du Fossé, who had been caught in bed, Fontaine and De Saçi were brought home to be interrogated. The chief articles of accusation against them were, that they had a private printing press in the house; and that they were accustomed to hold illegal meetings. No evidence was brought, and none was found to support the charge. For a fortnight the police remained in possession of the house and their prisoners; then, in spite of all the exertions of their friends, De Saçi, Fontaine, and the two brothers Du Fossé were removed to the Bastille. They found a melancholy satisfaction in the thought that the 14th of May, the day of their first arrest, was also the day on which St. Cyran was sent to Vincennes.

Among the friends of the prisoners Madame de Pomponne was especially active. She was the wife of the Marquis de Pomponne, D'Andilly's second son, who, having already experienced some of the vicissitudes of court favour, was

* Vol. iv. p. 42.

now ambassador extraordinary in Sweden. The time had not yet come when Louis XIV. was unwilling to be ably and faithfully served by one who bore the hated name of Arnauld. Mad. de Pomponne was not afraid on this occasion to peril her own and her husband's position, by interference on behalf of her cousin in the Bastille. She used all her influence to prevent his imprisonment; she eagerly begged of the King to be allowed to visit him in prison; she took charge of his house and effects; and zealously worked for his deliverance. So too, the brothers Du Fossé were soon released, by help of the Chancellor Le Tellier. But the great scandal remained. De Saçi, an ecclesiastic of singularly blameless and quiet character, who had taken little part in the disputes which divided the Church, but spent his whole time in the discharge of his duties as a confessor and in the study of the Scriptures, was imprisoned for more than two years, not only without offence, but without a definite accusation of offence, against the laws. M. de Pontchateau spoke no more than the truth, when he wrote thus boldly to the Archbishop, demanding of him the release of De Saçi and the nuns of Port Royal:—"Permit me, my Lord, to begin this letter by representing to you the great wrong which you do yourself in confining in the Bastille an ecclesiastic of such eminence as M. le Maître de Saçi. There is this peculiarity about him, that perhaps no person of this age has shown in his works a more pious science, or a more scientific piety, than he. All his labours have been bestowed on subjects remote from controversy, and thus have edified the whole Church. And a very extraordinary thing is, that while all the world has read his books with great approval, he has always taken the utmost pains to remain concealed: to evade by his humility the esteem which he deserved: to remain in the secrecy of his solitude, that in proportion as he was unknown to men, he might draw down upon himself, his works, and his

readers, the blessing of Heaven. I always thought that the innocence of his life, as well as that which appears in all his writings, would shield him from the hatred of the world, and that a man who has never given any one the least reason to complain of him, would himself avoid persecution. And truly, I can easily believe what is said, that he would never have been arrested, had he been known. In any other age, a person of his ability and piety could not have become known, except at the risk of being compelled to leave his solitude. Men would have done violence to his modesty, and would have given him a rank in the Church, which he merits the more, that he has always been very far from desiring it. But God has other rewards for his servants: He puts them to the proof: He perfects their charity by patience: and the evils which He sends them become their greatest good. Suffering is, for a good man, a singular grace: but it is a great sign of God's anger, that the Church should be profaned by the irregularities, the ambition, and the avarice of countless ecclesiastics, at the very time when the prisons, which are built only for criminals, are sanctified by the presence of God's servants, and are themselves the instruments of their sanctification." *

The prisoners were at first confined in separate cells, and carefully prevented from communicating with each other, or with any of their fellow captives. Their friends — many of them persons of high rank — came in great numbers to the Bastille, to hear tidings of them, and to implore the governor to treat them with such indulgence as was consistent with the performance of his duty. He, on the contrary, seemed to think that prisoners, in whose fate so many were interested, needed a double watchfulness, and rather increased than mitigated, in their behalf, the severity of the usual discipline. After a time, the kindness of a subordinate

* Divers Actes, rel. x. Lettre de M. de Pontchateau, &c., p. 2.

officer, M. Barail, procured for Fontaine the only favour which he desired — imprisonment in De Saçi's cell. "Open to me the great gate of the prison," he said to M. Barail one day as he was taking his usual walk in the courtyard, "and that of my master's room, and you will see to which I should run." De Saçi soon accommodated himself to the new conditions of his life. He had always looked forward to imprisonment in the Bastille. His habits, when at liberty, were retired and sedentary. He considered the walls of his prison rather as defences which kept the world from him, than as barriers which prevented him from seeing the world. He was wont to say, "If the King were to command the attendance of any one at a fixed place, what an honour would be not think it to obey! God Himself tells me that He will have me here — shall I not be too happy to be here?" So he settled himself quietly down to such occupation as the circumstances permitted,—the direction of his penitents by letter, like St. Cyran at Vincennes; and above all, his translation of the Scriptures. It would almost seem — Fontaine fancies, with kindly superstition — as if God had imprisoned him in order to the completion of this very work. He had already finished and corrected his version of the New Testament: the preface was in his pocket when he was arrested. And the very day after he had revised the last sheet of his translation of the Old Testament, the order came for his release.*

Meanwhile the contest in the Church seemed to narrow in its area, in proportion as it increased in virulence. The Four Bishops stood alone in their opposition to the Pope, the King, and the Jesuits. Louis himself denounced their mandements at the Holy See, and besought the Pope, not only to declare them null and void, but to appoint a tribunal for the trial and sentence of the authors. After

* Fontaine, vol. iv. pp. 31—111. Du Fossé, pp. 263—290.

some debate as to the constitution of this tribunal,—for the King, in his anti-Jansenist zeal, was in perpetual risk of making concessions as to the liberties of the Gallican Church, of which the Pope would quickly have taken advantage,—two archbishops and seven bishops were named, with full authority to suspend, or even excommunicate, the recusants. But, before the court met, its author was no more. Alexander VII. died on the 20th of May, 1667, and the elevation of Cardinal Rospigliosi to the Pontificate, under the name of Clement IX., soon changed the whole aspect of affairs.*

The new Pope appeared at first inclined to tread in the footsteps of his predecessor, and issued a brief for the condemnation of the Four Bishops, almost identical with one that Alexander had prepared. But the Nuncio, Bargellini, whom he sent to Paris, saw that the ascendancy of the Jesuits was not so great or so stable as it appeared. The Bishops,—as indeed all the heads of the Jansenist party,—were men of eminent sanctity; and public sympathy, except in times of great theological excitement, is always to a large extent on the side of severity of morals. Nineteen bishops, who had not been bold enough to refuse their signature, ventured to address the Pope in defence of their brethren; and the Nuncio wrote to Rome that their opinions were secretly shared by twenty more. They declared the orthodoxy of the Four Bishops to be as far above suspicion as their virtues; they repudiated the doctrine that the Church is infallible in the declaration of any but revealed facts, and imply a compliment to the Jansenists in the statement that, but for the attacks of their enemies, there would be peace without a papal decree. Two, if not three, of the prelates named upon the judicial commission,

* Gerberon, vol. iii. pp. 213—225. Histoire de l'Église de France, par l'Abbé Guettée, vol. x. p 405.

absolutely refused to act. The King's mind also had temporarily shaken off the prejudices imposed upon it by his Jesuit confessor. The friends of Port Royal attributed this effect in part to a paper by Antoine Arnauld, presented to the King, in answer to a violent attack made by the Archbishop of Embrun upon De Saci's version of the New Testament. It was far more probably due to the solicitations of his cousin, the Duchesse de Longueville, the former heroine of the Fronde, who, although she had sincerely abandoned the world of pleasure and ambition for the penances and prayers of Port Royal, might, he may have thought, become as dangerous an enemy to his maturer years as she had been to his youth. One of her brothers, the Prince de Conti, who died in 1666, had been as warm in the cause of Port Royal as herself; the other, the conqueror of Lens and of Rocroy, could refuse his sister nothing. She wrote an earnest letter to the newly-elected Pope; she interested two powerful cardinals in the cause of peace; she prevailed upon Gondrin, Archbishop of Sens, who had always held a middle place in the dispute, to undertake the office of mediator in France: and the negotiation, begun by a princess and managed by an archbishop, went on bravely.

Louis, however, was not won over in a moment. The nineteen bishops followed up their letter to the Pope, by one to the King, in which they declared that the sentence of the Four, by the proposed tribunal, would be an invasion of the liberties of the Church, equivalent to making the bishops no more than vicars of the Pope. He ordered the letter to be suppressed, and prohibited all meetings of the bishops for conference upon it. The Four appealed, in a circular letter, to all their episcopal brethren; and again an edict of suppression was issued. The King would permit no general expression of ecclesiastical opinion; in all that affected the interests of the Gallican Church, the

sole appeal was to himself. It may have been the feeling that throughout these transactions, the King was aiming at the establishment of a civil supremacy over the Church of France, which disposed the Pope to accept a peace, with or without the royal concurrence. Suddenly the Archbishop of Sens, and the Bishop of Chalons, who had undertaken the work of mediation, found the Nuncio willing to listen to them. His instructions from Rome were to make up the dispute with the Four Bishops, on what terms he could, provided only that he saved the credit of the Holy See. All parties agreed that the negotiation must be kept secret from the King's confessor and M. de Perefixe; and that, for the sake of avoiding needless debate, the conditions of the peace should not be published till the whole was finally concluded.

After many conferences, the articles of reconciliation were settled. The Four Bishops were to sign and procure the signature of the Formulary, making *vivâ voce*, and in the records of their episcopal synods, such distinction between "fait" and "droit" as they pleased. In addition to this, they were to write a respectful and submissive letter to the Pope, in which, however, they were not expected to make any retractation of former proceedings. It was especially stipulated, in addition, that the sisterhood and doctors of Port Royal were to be included in the treaty. The letter to the Pope was drawn up by Antoine Arnauld, somewhat altered by the Nuncio, and finally signed by all the bishops. Each convoked a synod for the signature of the Formulary, and each in the procès-verbal, with which the synod was opened, drew a clear distinction between "droit" and "fait," and the varying demands of the Church in regard to belief in them. The letter, the particulars of the signature, the procès-verbaux of the bishops, and a certificate of the facts, signed on the one side by Antoine Arnauld, on the other by M. de Chalons, were

sent, in answer to successive requests, to Rome. Then the Pope issued his brief to the King upon the conclusion of the peace. He was not ashamed to assert that the bishops had exacted a pure and simple signature to the Formulary. But men knew, nevertheless, that the Holy See had been compelled to abandon its pretension to infallibility in matters of fact.

The forms necessary to complete the reconciliation were now speedily gone through. The Pope addressed a brief, the King a letter to the Four Bishops. On the 18th of October, the King issued an order in council, in which, "conformably to the intentions of the Pope, he prohibits and forbids all his subjects to attack or provoke one another, under colour of past events, using the words heretic, Jansenist, or Semi-Pelagian, or any other party name; also to write or publish pamphlets upon the said controverted matters, or to wound by injurious phrases the reputation of those who shall have signed the said Formulary of faith, under the orders of their archbishops or bishops, under pain of exemplary punishment." Arnauld, no longer a fugitive, was graciously received by the Nuncio and the King: De Saçi, released from the Bastille, was vainly pursued in his retirement by offers of preferment. A medal, in honour of the peace, bearing the portrait of Louis, and the legend "ob restitutam Ecclesiæ concordiam," was struck at the royal mint. The Sorbonne, which still exacted of its graduates the signature of Arnauld's condemnation, alone stood apart from the general reconciliation. Père Annat, who found himself surprised into a peace, before he had opportunity to traverse the negotiation, bitterly reproached the Nuncio. "You have ruined," he said, "by a quarter of an hour's weakness, the work of twenty years." And he found little consolation when he turned to the King. "As for religion," Louis curtly replied, "that is the Pope's business: if he is satis-

fied, everyone else ought to be. And for what concerns my kingdom, I advise you not to trouble yourself." *

Thirty years later, when a long career of success had made Louis XIV. absolute King of France, and almost the arbiter of Europe, the peace of the Church would have been impossible. He was not strong enough yet, or not enough the slave of his Jesuit confessors, to put down by force a theological theory, which was represented in his own family, which sat at his council board, which was defended upon the episcopal bench, and which, whatever its orthodoxy, was practically identified with the most genuine piety and the strictest morals. Were we concerned to trace the history of civil liberty in France, we might draw an instructive contrast between the epoch when the King could indeed throw De Saçi into the Bastille, but could not prevent princesses and dukes, and ministers of state, from offering their sympathy to the prisoner, and that when the very buildings of Port Royal were razed to the ground, and the bones of its saints cast out of their graves, without a word of remonstrance. Even now there was a taint of insincerity in the reconciliation, which could not fail to spread. The archbishop and the Jesuits complained that they had been left out of the negotiations. The conditions of peace were kept secret: and the procès-verbaux of the Four Bishops became known only in their own dioceses. The most absurd rumours were propagated: men said that the Bishops had unconditionally signed the Formulary; that Arnauld had gone to the Nuncio, and declaring, with many tears, his repentance of his past obstinacy, had implored to be again received to the bosom of the Church. It is a melancholy truth that the papal

* Guettée, vol x. pp. 406—443. Gerberon, vol. iii. pp. 219—244. Besoigne, vol. vi. pp. 35—42. Fontaine, vol. iv. pp. 120—156. Du Fossé, pp. 304—318.

brief, addressed to the King, did not accurately represent the facts of the case; and then, as since, the Jesuits affirmed that all the concessions had been on the side of Port Royal. No wonder then, that, after a few years, the peace was seen to be no more than a truce.

The Bishop of Alet had expressly stipulated that the nuns and doctors of Port Royal should be included in the arrangement, to which, as we have seen, Arnauld was a principal party. And the King, when M. de Perefixe complained that he had not been consulted, declared that he had kept Port Royal, and the embarrassing position of the Archbishop, specially in view; and that nothing more need now be done, than follow the example of the Pope in his treatment of the Bishops.* The nuns were themselves not hopeful. They were weary of schemes of compromise, which seemed to them only so many snares for simple consciences. La Mère Agnès writes to her brother, in July, 1668†: "Although the condition in which we are involves many afflicting circumstances, they are nevertheless not so painful and disquieting to the mind as these constant proposals of accommodation. By God's grace we are not afraid of the roaring of the lion, but we tremble with fear of the serpent's deceit, which assures us that we shall live, when we render ourselves deserving of death." The only plan which seemed to them worthy of consideration, was one supported by Madame de Longueville and the Bishop of Meaux: to transfer the abbey into the diocese of some bishop, less bigoted on behalf of the Formulary than M. de Perefixe. A specific project of exchange with the Cistercian house of Lys, in the diocese of Sens, was entertained, but many difficulties of detail prevented its execution. Then came the general peace, and

* Du Fossé, p. 310.

† Lett. de la Mère Agnès, vol. ii. p. 261.

the discussion of the terms on which the sisterhood were to be admitted to its benefits.*

It was necessary that the first overtures should come from the nuns. Accordingly, Agnès Arnauld was persuaded to write letters to the King and to the Archbishop †, begging that the community of Port Royal might now be restored to the enjoyment of the sacraments, and the exercise of ecclesiastical functions. In the first she especially protested against the nomination of Sœur Perdreau to the abbacy of Port Royal de Paris, which the King had just made, pointing out to him, that she herself had only resigned the title, which she had derived from his father, Louis XIII., in favour of the right of triennial election, and that therefore no nomination could legally take effect till after her death. In the second letter she makes no promise of a fresh signature, but contents herself with asserting the unchanged orthodoxy of the community. Neither of these letters called forth an answer. So long as there was any hope that the peace might not be ratified, the Archbishop made no sign. At last, in February, 1669, when the arrival of the Pope's brief to the Four Bishops seemed to place the accommodation beyond possibility of question, M. de Perefixe announced that he was willing to listen to proposals from Port Royal. A petition was drawn up for the nuns, which satisfied neither themselves nor him. He asked that they should adopt, *mutatis mutandis*, the terms of the certificate as to the procès-verbaux of the bishops, which the Bishop of Chalons and Antoine Arnauld had sent to Rome. It is hardly necessary to narrate in detailed order all the persuasions and negotiations, which at last ended in the signature. The sisterhood sympathised but coldly with

* Lett. de la M. Agnès, vol. ii. pp. 266, 283. Divers Actes, rel. xii. p. 176, *et seq.* Besoigne, vol. ii. p. 415, *et seq.*

† Lett. de la M. Agnès, vol. ii. pp. 272, 276.

the peace of the Church, and disapproved the concessions which their doctors had made. Now when it was their own turn to act, they drew back in conscientious hesitation. They saw a snare in every phrase: a desertion of the truth here, and there a concession of their conventual rights. Arnauld and Nicole argued, explained, entreated—at first almost in vain. Finally, the required declaration was signed on the 14th February, 1669, in the presence of the Bishop of Meaux.*

I have often quoted the declarations which the nuns of Port Royal refused to sign: it is right to place side by side with them the cumbrous and obscure terms of the compromise to which they finally submitted:—

"To Monseigneur, the most illustrious and most reverend the Archbishop of Paris:

"Monseigneur:

"All your daughters, the nuns of the Abbey of our Lady of Port Royal who are at present in the monastery of Port Royal des Champs, represent in all humility to your fatherly charity, that their true disposition is, never to have entertained any but the most zealous wishes for the preservation of the faith of the Church, and a profound submission to the Holy See; that they condemn the Five Propositions in all sincerity, without any exception or restriction whatever, in all the senses in which the Church has condemned them; that they are very far from hiding in their hearts any design to renew these errors under any pretext, or to suffer that any of their number should renew them, and become obnoxious to the condemnation of the Church, there being no persons more inviolably attached to her doctrine, upon this and all other points. And as to the attribution of

* Guilbert. Mémoires historiques et chronologiques sur l'Abbaye de P. R. des Ch. i. pp. 1—246. Lett. d'Ant. Arnauld, vol. i. p. 349; vol. viii. pp. 126—169. Divers Actes, rel. xii. pp. 186, 191. Besoigne, vol. ii. pp. 428—445.

these propositions to Jansen's book, they give to the Holy See all the deference and obedience due to it—such as all theologians agree ought to be given to it in regard to all books condemned according to the Catholic doctrine, maintained in all ages by all doctors, and also in these latter times by the greatest defenders of the authority of the Holy See—as Cardinals Baronius, Bellarmin, De Richelieu, Palavicini, Fathers Sirmond and Petau; and also conformably to the spirit of the Apostolical Bulls, which is neither to say, nor to write, nor to teach anything contrary to what has been decided by the Popes on this subject. For these reasons, Monseigneur, and regard having been had to our above declaration, which we understand to be conformed to that which has been sent to our Holy Father the Pope, in the names of some of our Lords the Bishops, and with which His Holiness has been satisfied, may it please your Grandeur to forget what we may have done indiscreetly in the course of this troublesome affair, and to re-establish us in the state in which we were before our disgrace; promising you, all of us, that we will employ all our prayers and vows to draw upon you all manner of blessings.—Done at our monastery of Port Royal des Champs, this 14th of February, 1669."*

The Archbishop was not slow to grant the request contained in the letter. On the 18th of February his grand vicar came to Port Poyal, and read to the assembled community the sentence which restored them to the exercise of their religious rights. Then followed a joyous Te Deum: the bells were rung, the gates of the church thrown open, and all the villagers round about flocked to Port Royal to wonder at the unaccustomed sight. But the restoration was hardly complete until the community had taken part in the services of the church, performed by one of their own directors. Ten days afterwards Antoine Arnauld came for

* Divers Actes, vol. xii. p. 191.

this purpose. While he was in the midst of the mass, a little procession entered the church chanting the words, "omnes qui de uno pane, et de uno calice participamus," "all of us who partake of one bread, and of one cup." What better words to express the re-union of friends, who, parted by hostile circumstance, had yet been one in heart and faith? The new comer was the Curé of Magny, a village hard by Port Royal, who had been a firm friend of the sisterhood in their trouble, and desired to show, by coming in this festive way, his participation in their joy. Men were reminded of the old days, when Angélique Arnauld, and the solitaries whom she had drawn round her, had made Port Royal a centre of help and comfort to every surrounding hamlet.*

No Protestant reader can refuse to sympathise with the nuns of Port Royal in their aversion to the terms of the document which was the instrument of their release. Their position throughout the debate of the Formulary had been that of simple faithfulness to truth. They could not certify a fact of which they were necessarily ignorant. They resisted their imposition of a test, the acceptance of which would have compelled them to assert an untruth. They left to the great doctors of the party all fine-drawn theories of canonical obedience, and for themselves feared nothing so much as the subtle definitions and distinctions which seemed to cloud the clear vision of conscience. And if we compare the Declaration of the nuns with the Formulary of Alexander VII., I fear that the chief difference which we shall note, is the complexity and obscurity of the one in contrast to the clearness and brevity of the other. The Formulary condemns the Five Propositions in "the proper sense" of Jansen, "as the Apostolic See has condemned them." The Declaration condemns the propositions "in all the senses in

* Divers Actes, rel. xii. pp. 191—197.

which the Church has condemned them," and therefore, if the Church or its Head speak truly, in the sense of the Augustinus. The Formulary roundly states that the Propositions are extracted "from the book of Cornelius Jansenius, entitled 'Augustinus.'" The Declaration promises, in regard to this matter, all the deference and obedience due to the Holy See, and then proceeds to quote, as authoritative exponents of the kind and degree of obedience, the Jesuit theologians Simmond and Petau. It is impossible not to feel that this is no righteous settlement of the controversy. These equivocal phrases have not the clear ring of honest conviction. They would have been more appropriate in the book of the casuists, than in the mouth of the companions of Pascal; and the long scruple of the community, rather than its final acquiescence, expressed the true spirit of Port Royal.

Perhaps St. Cyran and Pascal were the only two of the French Jansenists who clearly saw the attitude towards the Holy See, into which their party might finally be forced by the controversy of grace. The former had a deep conviction of the necessity of doctrinal and moral reform in the Church, and possibly had formed schemes for its realisation: a clear intellect and a resolute conscience drove the other, when once he had irrevocably taken the first step of Jansenism, into a half rebellion against the Papal authority. Circumstance might have brought both, with no more doctrinal inclination towards Protestantism than is implied in their Augustinian theology, into something like the Protestant relation to the Pope and the Church. I cannot believe that any pressure of hostile or friendly authority would have induced either to acquiesce in the declaration of the nuns of Port Royal. But the advisers of Port Royal in 1669 were men of another mould. They were Catholics as much in feeling and ecclesiastical theory as in doctrine. De Saçi, like Singlin, concentrated himself on the work of practical edification.

Arnauld and Nicole, especially the former, were theologians who had a wider than a Jansenist reputation; were recognised as Doctors of the Church; and were now entering upon the controversy with Claude and the Huguenots, which produced their great book on the Eucharist, "De la Perpétuité de la Foi." And they may have felt indignant that the persevering hostility of a party, called forth and fed, less by high motives of policy than by personal jealousies and animosities, should avail to exclude them from the fellowship of the faithful, in which they had a right to take an honoured place. How more completely defeat and confound the Jesuits than by demonstrating in their signature their accord with the Holy See? What could better justify the utmost laxity of concession than an ardent desire for the peace of the Church?

The idea of a Catholic Church, one in doctrine, in discipline, and in ceremony, has a charm for every Christian imagination; nor least for those who are weary of the petty debates and uncharitable prejudices which build walls of separation between Protestant sects. But neither the gain nor the loss are all on one side. The Church, as described by Roman Catholic controversialists, is hardly the same as that which has made Christian History what it is. The disputes within are not less bitter than the disputes beyond the fold. Divergent and irreconcilable theories flourish beneath the very shadow of the Papal infallibility. The supreme authority is slow to pronounce, and always able to enforce, its decisions. But beyond this, a controversy which begins and ends within the pale of the Church is rarely conducted with outspoken honesty, or closed by a clear deliverance. Neither party can follow its principles to their legitimate consequences, for both appeal to the same standard of orthodoxy. Neither can claim a final victory for its truth, for the Papal decision is always

the imposition of silence, or the negotiation of a compromise. And so the story of Port Royal appears maimed and incomplete compared with those of Wiclif, of Huss, of Luther. Only the excommunicated heretic or the triumphant martyr wins the day against the Pope. No Catholic can make a compromise with Catholicism.

The community, about the time of the peace, consisted of sixty-eight professed, and sixteen lay sisters; that of Paris, even inclusive of lay sisters, numbered only eleven. It was the royal will, that henceforward the two houses should be separated. Port Royal de Paris was to retain one-third of the common property, as well as all the church plate now belonging to it, amounting in value to 60,000 livres. The extra-conventual buildings—such as the houses built by Madame de Gueméné, Madame de Sablé, and several other noble ladies, who had entered into friendly relations with the community—were to remain the property of the house in Paris. The King took into his own hands the right of nomination, and the bulls which Sœur Perdreau had obtained from Rome were allowed to take effect in her favour. Port Royal des Champs, on the contrary, preserved the right of triennially electing its abbess, was declared entirely independent of the community in Paris, and received two-thirds of the estates. Even this partition, unequal as it was, considering the numbers of the communities, was unfairly made; and Port Royal des Champs did not succeed in retaining above half the conventual property. Nevertheless it failed not to flourish as of old. Three sisters, who had signed the Formulary under the influence of the Archbishop and Flavie Passart, begged to be released from what had long been a hateful bondage to them in Port Royal de Paris, and were affectionately received by their old friends. The nuns were permitted to resume the work of education; and the first boarders whom they received were two Arnaulds, daughters

of Pomponne, now high in royal favour, and soon to be minister of state. Their numbers increased almost daily by the reception of fresh novices. A new abbess, the Mère du Fargis, was peaceably elected, Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld becoming prioress in her room. The buildings, already enlarged by the liberality of the Duc de Luynes during the wars of the Fronde, received important additions. The solitaries gradually came back to their old homes; and new penitents were added to their ranks. Madame de Longueville built herself a house near the convent, and protected it from insult by the presence of a princess of the royal house. In the last letter which La Mère Agnès ever wrote, addressed on the 10th of February, 1671, to the Bishop of Alet, she speaks thus hopefully *:—"We should have wished not to increase in numbers, but we could not help it; which is a reason, as it seems to me, why we should trust in the Providence of God, who will provide, if it please Him, both in temporal and spiritual things, for those whom He has sent us. . . . We are obliged to confess that there are many faults among us, and that although God has given us the grace to stand fast in the truth, we have made little progress in charity. Do us the favour, Monseigneur, to obtain for us from God, faithfulness to walk in His ways with a new courage. We are not destitute of help towards our perfectness, having freedom of communication with those persons by whom we have always been conducted, and through whom the blessing of God has been shed abroad upon this house. He has also given us a mother abbess who is zealous to maintain an exact observance of our rule. She has commanded me most humbly to beg your holy benediction upon her and the whole community. And if it please you, Monseigneur, I ask it espe-

* Lett. de la Mère Agnès, vol. ii. p. 367.

cially for myself, who need it more than any, if only by reason of my age, which is seventy-seven years."*

The end was not far off. Agnès Arnauld was too feeble to subscribe this letter, and survived its date only nine days. Already in the previous year Père Annat had resigned his office into the hands of Ferrier, and died a few months after his retirement from court. The Archbishop of Paris had followed him on the first day of 1671. And now the abbess, whose name and authority had made her the representative and bulwark of the community, was about to pass with her foes where all feuds are reconciled. More fortunate than her sister, she had lived to see the storm scatter itself, and leave the community only more united, and more zealous in the cause of Cistercian purity than before. The second anniversary of the peace was but a melancholy festival at Port Royal. While High Mass was being sung in the church, the last sacraments were administered in La Mère Agnès's cell. The next day she died, after one of these short quiet sicknesses, which sap the strength of extreme old age. She had been seventy years a nun; and for sixty-two years had borne a large part in the government of the house

The history of Port Royal is her biography, as it was that of Angélique Arnauld. Together they fulfilled the presage, afforded by the words which the service book presented to her eye when, almost a child, she entered upon the office of coadjutrix of Port Royal. "They are two olive trees, and two shining lights before the Lord." "It seemed," says their niece and successor, Angélique de St. Jean, "as if God had so distributed the gifts which He allotted to them, as to render their direction useful to all kinds of persons. There appeared in La Mère Angélique an ardent,

* *Lett.* de la Mère Agnès, vol. ii. pp. 290, 302, 307, 309, 327, 350. Besoigne, vol. ii. p. 455, *et seq.*

vigorous, and tender charity, which knew how to abase and to exalt itself in due season, which made itself both loved and feared, which had the secret of overturning all things by its force, and restoring all things by its goodness. In La Mère Agnès, on the contrary, one saw a uniform equality of spirit, a wisdom always the same, a gravity accompanied by sweetness, which inspired confidence and respect, and which was as instructive in its silence as by its words. Her example, without the aid of any written rule, was enough to regulate a community, to inspire and maintain in it an exact observance. Everywhere, her presence and her watchfulness over every trifle made all attentive to their duties. Above all, her exactness in everything that relates to the divine office, in which her piety caused her to find her chief delight, could not be surpassed. Even in her greatest weakness she could not be torn from it without extreme violence; so that if one dare lay anything to the charge of God's elect, one might accuse her of an excessive love for all the externals of Divine Service."*

This equanimity and regularity of spirit, even if it sometimes hid the true ardour of her devotion, brought her perhaps nearer to the ideal of Roman Catholic saintship, than her more impetuous and variable sister. At the beginning of the troubles, her nephew Le Maître wrote to her, "I believe that the good Mère Agnès will remain as grave and quiet after this news as before; but although her fire may be somewhat covered with ashes, it is for all that as ardent as that of our mother, which sends forth more flames."† So throughout the long persecutions of Port Royal she escaped all personal unpopularity. Those whose duty it was to act against her acknowledged her virtues. Even M. d'Aubrai, when he carried to her the cruel order

* Mém. pour servir. vol. iii. p. 208.

† Recueil d'Utrecht, p. 207.

to dismiss the boarders and postulants, said, "All the saints, ma mère, have been persecuted: are you not willing to be like them?"*

St. Cyran, says Lancelot, called her "the Theologian," meaning, I suppose, that in contradistinction to Angélique, who was made for government, the work of Agnès was rather in the closet. Besides the unlucky "Chapelet Secret," she was the author of certain regulations for the government of the monastery, and of a book called "The Image of the Perfect and Imperfect Nun," so highly esteemed as to be excepted from the prohibition, which during the persecution was issued against the writings of the Port Royalists. Two large volumes of her letters have only recently been published (1858) by M. Prosper Faugère, the editor of Pascal. Compared with those of La Mère Angélique, which saw the light as far back as 1742, they illustrate the contrast between the sisters which their niece has drawn. They are far less concerned with events and persons, more with ideas; supply the reader with fewer characteristics of the writer and her correspondents; are less graphic in style, more level in emotion, and contain a larger proportion of that religious exhortation, which however warm and living, as it flows from heart to heart, runs the risk of appearing tame and cold when exposed to the general eye. But they are beyond doubt the letters of a thoughtful and right-minded woman, whose whole heart was in her vocation, and who lived in the presence of God, in a way which it is not easy for a less pure and spiritual nature even to understand.

At this point we leave for a time the connected history of Port Royal, to attempt to trace and estimate its influence upon literature and society in France. The task will compel us both to retrace and advance our steps beyond

* Mem. pour servir. vol. iii. p. 210.

the exact epoch of the Peace of the Church. Pascal, the greatest of Port Royalists, belongs to its former generation. The schools, in which many of the improved methods of modern education had their origin, never reassembled after their dispersion in 1660. Arnauld, Nicole, De Saci, are now in the full vigour of their power. The vicissitudes which made a romance of Madame de Longueville's life are already passed, and her love for La Rochefoucauld is a tradition of the Fronde. But Racine's first masterpiece, the "Andromaque," has only just appeared; the fruits of Tillemont's researches into the history of the Church are yet lying in his study, and the Jesuits have still to discover that Quesnel is as dangerous a heretic as Jansen. There are other great names which Port Royal can hardly claim as its own, yet which are connected with it by many ties of friendship; and not the least of these Madame de Sevigné and Boileau. It is a tempting field in which to linger a while, as the prosperity of Port Royal gives occasion, even though it be hard to reduce such figures to a small canvass, and to delineate in a few pages men and women who played a great part at the greatest epoch of French history.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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